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THE
P O R T R A I T.

A
N O V E L.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR T. HOOKHAM,
At his Circulating Library, NEW BOND-STREET,
Corner of BRUTON-STREET.

M.DCC.LXXXIII.

PORTER

A

OF THE

TWO VOLUMES



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M. 100. 1. 1. 1.

THE
P O R T R A I T.

W. B E L L M O N T E S Q .

T O

G E O R G E B O D E N , E S Q .

OH ! George, what a relief !
what an extatic situation am I now
in, compared to that in which you

A 2

left

at

left me. Give me joy, I have heard of my angel! I have read, with unspeakable transports, a letter wrote by her own dear hand. She loves me still, she confesses it to her sister, nor forbade her to shew me this enchanting testimony of her tendernefs.

Meet me this evening, if possible, in Pall-Mall; I will then inform you of every particular. What an infamous transaction! By Heavens, were it not for the reasons my sensible Maria mentions, I would kick up such a dust in Grosvenor Square, as should make the old Don repent his plotting. --- Would you believe it, 'tis to all his Lordship's cursed machina-

machinations, I am indebted for all the misery you have seen me suffer ; and still must suffer, till my beloved is restored to me ; and when that will be, Heaven above knows : for though my heart throbs with pleasure at this moment, I am far from that happiness my soul pants for.

She is well, she writes to Mrs. Marchmont, writes too with her usual vivacity. George, I can hardly pardon my angel for this cheerfulness, while I am in despair ; but she has more spirit, more good sense, than ever yet met in one female, or male either, I believe.

She is confined in a convent, but where, she refuses to inform us ---

refuses too, for reasons, which, though I believe wise ones, I cannot for my soul approve.

Come to me this evening without fail, and we will talk the matter over. She has not been so guarded in her account of her prison, but, I think, a love, fervent as mine will be able to discover it. It is not far from Paris, I find ; that knowledge shall direct my steps, so if you have a mind for a trip, say the word ; for off I go, in spite of all the dear perverse one's commands to the contrary. Could I but once get a sight of her, I think, I shall yet prevail. — All hopes of being restored to my grandfather's good
graces

graces are at end. — Lady Ann ---
 or *disinheritance* is the alternative. ---
 I have chosen the latter ; and if my
 Maria will, disinherited as I am,
 consent to be mine, I would not
 change conditions with an Em-
 peror.

Do not disappoint me, as you
 value my friendship.

W. B.

M R S. M A R C H M O N T

H A R R I O T

I SEND you a second letter from
 our poor Maria, my dear Harriot,
 which, to our great joy, arrived a
 few days ago. I would have sent
 it sooner, but wished first to let
 Bellmont have a sight of it, and he
 was then out of town. I foresee
 the astonishment you will be in, on
 finding our cruel, unforgiving grand-
 father the cause of this, and indeed
 of all the afflictions we ever suffered.
 You see my conjectures were actually
 well

well founded. --- What an irreconcilable hatred has he retained for years against relations who never, in any one instance, gave him just cause of offence ! --- Just cause, I say, for surely the crime of which he accused my honoured father, deserved not such implacable resentment ; --- and for us, what have we done to merit this horrid, contemptuous treatment ! But let me, if possible, forget it, and think only of my amiable sister ; she is the only one can suffer by his inhumanity : — thank Heaven, I stand in no need of his favours. Charles is also content with his little independence. --- But my Maria --- dear girl, what

has she not to fear --- what has she not already suffered ? --- And, alas ! is she not now in his power ?

She bids me be comforted, certain she will soon regain her liberty. But ah ! Harriot, is she not too sanguine in those pleasing hopes ; good Heavens ! had I been doomed to meet with such an adventure, I should have died with apprehensions : but happily for her, she is blessed with more fortitude than ever I could boast of. Are you not astonished at the chearfulness with which she writes ? Poor Bellmont, though he absolutely adores her, though he would part with all he is worth, I am persuaded, to purchase

chase her happiness, yet, he could not, without visible uneasiness, discover by her letter, the tranquillity she seems to have acquired. “ Ah ! ” cried he, “ my dear Mrs. Marchmont, could my Maria write with this charming vivacity, with this ease, did she feel, as I feel, the torment of our separation.” “ And you are then sorry,” said I, “ to find the dear girl is not miserable --- ” “ Heaven forbid,” replied he, interrupting me, with fervor, “ but surely, surely, she need not bear it with quite so much philosophy, while I am distracted with ten thousand fears.” “ Ah ! you men,” said I, smiling, “ are never content ;

tent; shall I write, and intreat her
 to console you, by passing all her
 solitary hours in sighs and tears?"---
 He started.--- "You know then,
 where the angel is!" cried he, with
 a look, I cannot describe, "You
 have betrayed yourself, you would
 have the barbarity to deceive me;
 Oh! Mrs. Marchmont, is this
 kind, is this using me well? --- I
 found it no easy matter, to convince
 him he was mistaken, and only
 joked, when I talked of writing;
 "Read her letter again," said I,
 "see if there is a possibility that I
 should guess from its contents,
 where a letter would find her? and
 I give you my honour it contains
 all

all the information I am mistress of." — At length he believed me, or affected to do so: though I really doubt it. I said all I could possibly think of, to persuade him of the necessity there was to keep our knowledge of the base part Lord Bellmont had acted a secret; and never sure, was there a harder task; we were absolutely obliged to use force to prevent his flying instantly to Grosvenor Square. He swore he would go, though at the hazard of his life, and openly reproach him with his baseness: — had he not robbed him of his heart's dearest treasure? And by what right? — I boldly gazed to-eyed on He

He despised his fortune, he wanted no favours.

In short, my dear, he was for some hours frantic with his rage ; but by my expostulations, was at length convinced he would only by giving way to his passion, retard, and perhaps wholly put it out of our power ever to procure her liberty. He vowed, however, he would go instantly to Paris, this, at least, he was at liberty to do ; he made no doubt of being able to discover her place of concealment. I intreated him only to delay his journey till we heard from her again ; that if she then had formed no plan, or had no hopes of being released, I
gave

gave him my promise Mr. Marchmont and I would accompany him, and make every possible enquiry --- again put him in mind of her intreaty, that we would not for some time take any step of that nature.

All I could say on this head was to no purpose, he would only promise not to set off without our knowledge.

We have every thing to dread from the impetuosity of his temper; yet I think we may depend upon his word, and that he will not go without acquainting us; but we must, if possible, dissuade him from it, since, should he even find her, it can answer no good purpose, and may occasion more trouble and distress

trefs to both : we must prevail so far
 as to keep him, at least, till we hear
 from her again. Farewel, my dear
 Harriot ; thank Heaven, we begin to
 regain some degree of tranquillity.
 Cruel as the dear girl's situation is,
 yet we have the consolation to know
 she is well, and that no farther injury
 is intended her ; of this you see she
 has no apprehensions, and her con-
 finement cannot last for ever ; his
 Lordship's power does not extend
 quite so far as that : let us hope
 then we shall soon have the happi-
 ness of seeing her. And in the
 mean time, comfort ourselves with
 the knowledge that she is surpriz-
 ingly

ingly cheerful and resigned -- once

more adieu! as I have already

has taken, convinced it can be

Mr. C. M. a good purpose. Should I

Bellmont hear of it, which we can

not doubt, Heaven knows what

may be the consequence, expec-

tated, as he is already, but there's

no doubt **THE SAME TO THE SAME**

hopes that the dear girl's next letter

ALL we could say was to no pur-
pose, Belmont set off yesterday for
Paris, declaring he would never see
England more, unless accompanied
by his Maria.

He left us a direction to a friend
of his there, who would take care
to forward any letters we may have
occasion

occasion to send him. I am exceedingly displeased at the step he has taken, convinced it can answer no good purpose. Should Lord Bellmont hear of it, which we cannot doubt, Heaven knows what may be the consequence, exasperated, as he is already, but there's no help for it. I am not without hopes that the dear girl's next letter will be more explicit, she may possibly intrust me with the knowledge of the convent she is in; I shall then have it in my power to put her on her guard.

Whether mortified by the disappointment of the projected alliance, or some other cause, I know not, but

but Lady Ann Bosville has not made her appearance in town this winter, which, I am informed, she used generally to do. Most sincerely do I wish *her* heart may be less interested in it, than that of his Lordship and her own family. I hear a most pleasing account of her, but cannot learn *that* particular.

Charles is in the greatest anxiety about our poor Maria; he disapproved much of Bellmont's going abroad, for I wrote instantly to ask his opinion of it, though I then hoped to prevail on him to delay his journey. He declares could he possibly have got permission to leave his regiment he would have set off
imme-

immediately; *his* going would have been looked upon as natural, and certainly could not have given offence to his Lordship, had he even known that we were acquainted with his being the cause of our trouble; but Bellmont's going will convince him we guess she is abroad, and as a guilty conscience needs no accuser, he may also, from that, guess we suspect him.

I am vexed beyond measure, yet have no redress. --- Adieu, my dear; your amiable brother is my only consolation, and he, indeed, is all my heart can wish. This unfortunate affair makes me extremely desirous to quit London; I long
for

for the sweet tranquillity of Rose-Hill, and hope Mr. Marchmont will indulge me by going down much sooner than we intended when we left it. Ah ! how little did we then dream of what has happened since that time.

Farewel !

Your's,

C. M.

MARIA

M A R I A
T O
H E R S I S T E R.

READ with attention, my dearest Charlotte; read and rejoice! for I have much to tell you, and much to hope. — It has not been in my power to write so soon, as, I am sure, you anxiously wished for: well do I know the painful suspense you must long have been in, but believe me, I too have my share; however, I trust, I shall soon give you a more pleasing account of my
affairs,

affairs, even now, I hope you will see they are no longer in the deplorable way they once were.

I told you my friend, Miss Percival, was soon to leave this dreary abode, for dreary are the best of them, my dear, let the world, and their sober inhabitants say what they please to the contrary.

About ten days ago, to her very agreeable surprize, Lady Mortimer arrived here herself, instead of the person she once talked of sending for her niece. She begged I would permit her to introduce me to her; to this, you may believe, I had no objection. At her second visit I accompanied Caroline, for that is her name,

name, to the parlour; I was much struck with her Ladyship's air and engaging manner; and so much had been said of me, I fancy, by my friend, that she appeared no less pleased with me. I found something so open, so ingenuous in her conversation, that I was led, though not impertinently pressed, to inform her fully of every particular relating to myself. I found she was intimately acquainted with Lord Belmont; that she knew my father when a young man, and every thing that had happened in consequence of his marriage; kindly adding, she had ever severely blamed his Lordship, for his unmerited cruelty,

cruelty, having heard the most amiable character imaginable of our dear mother. Think what were my feelings, Charlotte, on finding myself in the company with one so intimately acquainted with all these matters ; and one too, who did us the justice to think we had been treated most inhumanly. She was no stranger to the intended alliance between my Bellmont and the redoubtable Lady Ann ; though she had not seen him since he returned from his travels ; her Ladyship, she knew well, and assured me from her own knowledge, it was a match by no means agreeable to the lady ; whether from a partiality to another

object, she could not tell. "Can you, my dear Miss Bellmont," added she, smiling, "forgive her Ladyship's want of taste?" — I assured her, however it might surprize me, it gave me more pleasure than pain --- for by this time, as I said before, she knew my whole history ; and what I am going farther to relate, was not, you may suppose, all settled and contrived during our first interview ; many very serious consultations we had, and a variety of plans laid down for my enlargement, before it was brought to its present happy conclusion ; --- happy, I trust, it will be ; though I am to continue a while to play

play the part of a heroine. But to proceed: Lady Mortimer declared herself so much interested in my fate, that she kindly assured me she would not leave France, till she had seen things put upon a happier footing, by some means or other. "In the first place," said she, "I will take an opportunity to talk seriously to the Abbess, and if possible, convince her, that you have been exceedingly ill used; my next step shall be to try if she will suffer you to return to England with me, and still let his Lordship believe you are under her care. If I can gain these two points" said the amiable Lady Mortimer, "I have a confused

idea of a scheme, that may possibly turn out agreeable to all parties."

What this scheme was, her Ladyship did not explain, till she had, as she proposed, talked to the Abbess. My anxiety, in the mean time, you may more easily conceive than I can describe. Caroline and I formed a thousand conjectures, each of them abundantly wild and romantic; for we concluded adventures so finely begun as mine, would not, or at least ought not to end without as romantic a conclusion. She expressed the most affectionate desire for my going with them to England; wished of all things in life, to be acquainted with my
Charlotte,

Charlotte, with your Henry, and our charming Charles. In short, my dear, if ever we do meet, as something tells my heart we shall, I am certain you will be highly delighted with my new friends.

At length the wished for conference was obtained ; and my kind Lady Mortimer's eloquence conquered all my sage Duenna's scruples; she consented not only to my leaving her house, but agreed, though this point was the most difficult to gain, to conceal from Lord Bellmont my flight as long as she possibly could : — she confessed she thought the friendship she meant to shew me in favouring my escape, was more

meritorious than blameable; I had during the time I had been under her care, she was pleased to add, endeared myself so much by my chearful and obliging behaviour, that she was happy to have it in her power to contribute to my felicity, yet she felt extreme regret in parting with me. I ought here, in justice, to observe, she had from my first arrival treated me with the greatest tenderness and attention; though I have no reason to believe *that* was any part of the orders she received from Lord Bellmont. In fine, my dear, we got her consent to all our desires; and Lady Mortimer talks of setting out for England in about a week

week or ten days, unless she should be prevailed upon by Caroline first to take a short view of Paris. This she has half promised, and I think, she will not find courage to refuse, for she doats on the amiable girl. I hardly need add I am to be of the party, or that I have no great objection to it; it can be attended with no danger, as it is a million to one, if any one there should be able to betray our grand secret. But now comes the principal part of our plot: I told you we had proposed a variety of schemes, that of merely returning to England, would have answered very little purpose; Lady Mortimer had farther views

when she first mentioned it, though not then so well arranged as to be revealed to us misses. --- Now take the whole plan — Though I am on the point of returning to England, you must not expect to see me for some time; I go with Lady Mortimer to her country seat, not as Maria Bellmont, but as a Miss Neville, a young lady of family, though no great favourite of Fortune; this, however, you are to observe, is Miss Neville's only defect, for she has every other perfection, both of mind and person, that ever met in mortal before. I hope you are of this opinion, Charlotte. With her I am to make some stay; in the
course

course of things, her old friend, Lord Bellmont, is to visit there as usual; he is to be prodigiously struck with the beauties, the accomplishments, the graces of the said Miss Neville. We take it for granted, my dear, that his favourite Lady Ann, has by this time given his Lordship to understand, that whatever her sentiments might once have been in regard to his ungracious grandson, (her Ladyship's destined husband) she has too much pride and spirit to accept him *now*, convinced, as she has pretty good reason to be, to say the truth, that his heart is otherwise disposed of. — *He* finding all hopes of that nature at an

end, and not having another Lady Ann at hand, takes it into his head, that a being so irresistible as Miss Neville, may, could she be brought to come into his Lordship's scheme, possibly induce Bellmont to give up the insignificant girl, his silly heart is at present set on, if offered to his acceptance by his said Lordship; and with her, a full forgiveness of all his past transgressions.

This, my dear Charlotte, is my kind friend Lady Mortimer's plan; how far it is a feasible one, I leave you to judge. I fancy her Ladyship now and then dips into some of our modern novels, there a scheme of this nature would succeed to a nicety,

nicety ; but how far it will answer in real, sober life, is quite another affair. However, it will serve to amuse us for a while, and should it fail of producing the wonderful effects we expect, 'tis but dismissing poor Miss Neville to the other world, and repairing her loss, by bringing your friend Maria again into play.

Thus, my dear Charlotte, I have given you a full account of our present important design. You see Lord Bellmont does not possess the only plotting head in the kingdom : whose will prove most successful, time only can discover. It may not now be amiss to chat a little about

my poor Bellmont; I hope he has seen the two epistles you have already received from me, and had the grace to be delighted with the honourable mention I there made of him; let him also peruse this with becoming attention: his concurrence, you may guess, is absolutely necessary in this business.

He must appear totally ignorant of my return. It would not be amiss were he to affect being tolerably reconciled to the loss of his fair dulcinea, that he may with the better grace accept the hand of Miss Neville, should it ever be his good fortune to have it in his offer; but let him be aware how he *really* is

consoled for his loss --- Ah ! Heaven forbid ! ---- Who then would console the poor forsaken Maria ! --- Charge him on no consideration to think of visiting me at Lady Mortimer's, till we judge it a proper time ; as those matters must positively be left to our management. His impetuosity might in a moment frustrate all our high-raised expectations ; let him follow my prudent example. He ought to be convinced that my partiality, my attachment is not less sincere than his own. Let us with gratitude indulge my friend in her humour, nor by our impatience, put it out of her power to try its efficacy. That I would
 give

give worlds to see him at this moment, I confess without a blush. --- Yes, I confess it, though I know, nay desire he may read the line that thus betrays my weakness --- but it must not be. — A short time may perhaps free us both from this painful restraint ; in the mean time, intreat him, in my name, to be governed by those who are deeply interested in his happiness, by his Maria, who, whatever the success of this innocent deceit may be, will never, never give her hand, or heart to any man except her engaging Bellmont. This, he may be assured, is her fixed resolve ; and if he can-

3

not

not exist on this gracious assurance for a few months, she gives him to his own devices.

Adieu ! my dearest, dear Charlotte. How is my dear Marchmont, my loved Charles, my Harriot ? --- Ah ! with what transport shall I meet all those beloved friends ! --- And with what pleasure shall I, when I have you all seated round me, in my favourite bower at Rose-Hill, relate the wonderful adventures I have met with since I left it : that wished for hour, will arrive, Charlotte, doubt it not ; nor is it, I trust, far distant.

Should my generous friend's scheme fail, and I have not the
vanity

vanity to believe the contrary, however sanguine her hopes may be, I shall fly with rapture to the loved circle there, and in their sweet society, if possible, forget all my troubles.

Once more adieu ! If we are to visit Paris, I will write again before we sail for England : if not, you may depend on hearing from me the moment we get to Dover ; and also on our arrival in Berkshire.

Then may your Maria enjoy the delight of hearing from her beloved friends. — But for Heaven's sake let them all remember they must

must then address her by the name of
 Sophia Neville ; and be assured
 Sophia will love you as tenderly,
 as does

Your

Ever affectionate

M. BELLMONT.

THE

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

GOOD Heavens, Charlotte! what a surprise, I have not yet, nor do I know when I shall get the better of it, 'twas delightful, 'twas beyond all possible description delightful; yet I tremble with apprehensions for what may be the consequence, Oh! my charming, my impatient Bellmont, why, why would he venture to take this step in spite of all my entreaties, — Charlotte, he is actually in Paris, I have seen him, have talked to him, he has, at my feet, besought me to
forgive

forgive him, --- and was it in nature
 to refuse him. — Oh ! no, no, in
 that transporting moment I forgot
 his fault, forgot every thing but
 the joy of his dear presence ; and
 gave free vent to the overflowings
 of my heart, --- could you have be-
 lieved me so weak a creature, ah !
 I see it now in its true colours, it
 was indeed a weakness I did not
 imagine myself capable of. I find
 I am a mere woman, unless when
 out of his sight, all my boasted
 fortitude, all my philosophy took
 flight the moment I beheld him ---
 yet not quite all Charlotte, for I had
 still so much left as to refuse the
 request he made, and never was
 request

request so sweetly urged, to give him instantly my hand. — we bid adieu to my friend, the abbess, a few days after I sent you my last, and Lady Mortimer having agreed to indulge Caroline, in her desire to visit Paris, we set out for that celebrated capital, how was I disappointed to find it so far inferior to London, after having heard it so raved about by the silly some, who think it necessary, in order to shew their taste, to give the preference to every thing they meet with in foreign countries, however ill qualified to make just comparisons --- Many magnificent buildings there are no doubt, but take it, all in all

as it appears to those we will suppose, who only see the outside of things, who are not admitted into the buildings I talk of, and 'tis no more to compare to London than Wapping is to St. James's, narrow streets, high houses, bad pavements; but I have matters infinitely more interesting to employ my pen, so let people decide as they think proper. We were one evening at the Opera, Caroline and I, not a little delighted you may believe, to find so agreeable a change in our situation, and busily employed in showing off all our airs and graces to the best advantage, in order to do all the execution we could during our short stay,

stay, when casting my eyes to an
 opposite box, who should at that
 moment meet my glances, but my
 astonished Bellmont; here the ablest
 pen must fail in the attempt to de-
 scribe his emotions, nor were mine
 less violent — before I had time to
 inform Lady Mortimer she had ex-
 cited them, he was --- not indeed
 at my feet, the place we were in
 forbid that --- but in the box with
 us, imagine what followed my
 dear Charlotte, for I was too happy,
 too much delighted to think of any
 thing but my charming Bellmont;
 my friends now soon discovered it,
 I had not power to tell them; the
 poor opera had no longer any share
 of

of our attention, and our impatience to be more at liberty made us leave the fair creatures to warble out their loves to those more at liberty to listen to them than we were ; a friend of his was with him, a Mr. Boden, an agreeable man, and but for the presence of my William, might have been reckoned handsome : after our first delightful emotions began a little to subside, I took him severely --- yes, Charlotte, severely to task, for presuming to disobey my commands, set forth the imprudence of the step in the most flaming colours, declared I never could forgive it, sensible how very fatal to our
 peace

peace the consequence might be—
 During my lecture he held my hand
 in spite of no very violent resistance,
 looked so sweetly penitent, said so
 many *soft silly* things in his defence
 that --- in short, my dear, he did
 not appear to be so much terrified
 by my lecture, as I certainly intend-
 ed he should be, nay, he had the
 confidence to smile in my face, to
 kiss my hand a thousand times du-
 ring my sage exhortation, and when
 I had brought it to an end, freely
 declared he found no symptoms of
 repentance — Is he not a har-
 dened wretch, Charlotte? What
 hope can one form of a being so
 determined, so obstinate --- having
 from

from Lady Mortimer ; I, you may be sure, turned a deaf ear to his petition; he obtained permission to pay his respects next morning; he left us in a state of felicity, as he was in duty bound to say, no language could possibly describe ; and to tell you the truth, judging by my own feelings on the occasion, I had some reason to believe what he said was not a mere flourish ; we found him next morning waiting for us when we came down to breakfast, hoping I presume, to be admitted to our toilette according to the mode of the belles here, --- Lady Mortimer now desired he would attend seriously to what she was going to say, adding,

whatever he might think of her plan, she insisted on his agreeing to it in every particular; he seemed a little startled at her Ladyship's preface, guessing, I fancy, it foreboded a delay to *that* he had set his heart on, however he bowed, and she went on; she now gave him an account of all I mentioned to you in my last --- he sighed --- shook his head, and had the temerity to mutter something about the torture of delay; the pains of absence, the unfeeling heart of Lord Bellmont, and so forth; I was obliged to give him my hand, with a smile, to comfort, and reconcile him to our project; he begged hard to be per-

mitted to return to England with us, to have free liberty of visiting as often as he pleased at her Ladyship's in Berkshire, and I know not what all --- said there could be no danger since I was to take a new name; why should it be deemed improbable, that he should be acquainted with this Miss Neville? in short, we were obstinate --- he was compelled to consent to the following conditions; viz. not to leave Paris till we were gone, not to attempt coming to Lady Mortimer's without her permission; she promised he should have an invitation; that in the mean time, he was at liberty to write to Miss Neville as often as he

pleased, — thus, having finally settled this important business, we determined to set off for Calais in a few days, to prevent as far as possible a discovery of my escape from my prison, and now, my dear, that time is nearly arrived; to-morrow morning we bid adieu to my inconsolable William; the thoughts of our separation has already cost me more tears than I think proper to tell; but would it not be madness to consent to his proposal? I might possibly reconcile myself to the difficulty attending the moderate fortune he is master of, nay, could be supremely happy to share it with him, but can I answer; or

can

can he answer for himself, so far as to convince me, a time would never come in which he might look back with regret, to the riches he now finds it so easy to give up. Ah! forbid it Heaven, that ever I should live to see that fatal day — it would be the last of my happiness, if not of my life --- no, never, with my consent, shall my charming Belmont split on that rock which brought so much distress on my honoured father; never can I so far forget the mortifications, the insults he suffered from the same cause as to permit another, and one so tenderly beloved, to fall into the same error; whatever share of spi-

rits I am blessed with, I find I have
 not courage for it my dear Char-
 lotte, I tremble at the thought, I
 cannot, cannot agree to my amia-
 ble Bellmont's giving up all his
 noble prospects on my account. He
 in answer to this, tells me they are
 already vanished, Lord Belmont has
 done his worst, all possible hopes
 of a reconciliation are over ; alas !
 such is the situation of affairs at
 present, 'tis true, but who knows
 what may yet happen ; his Lordship
 may relent, a thousand things may
 occur to produce a change in his
 sentiments, he once loved him,
 with a father's fondness --- is it
 then in nature he should continue
 implacable,

implacable? Lady Ann may give her hand to another, she has an independent fortune, and may, without a sigh, resign all her other great expectations for the sake of the man she loves: charming as my Bellmont is, he is not that man, let us wait then, I repeat, let us wait with patience, nor by one precipitate, one imprudent step, subject ourselves to unavailing repentance. Ah, would to Heaven, I could prevail on my engaging William to reconcile himself to these sentiments. Farewel, Charlotte, to-morrow I shall be on my road to England; did we not a few months

ago, despair of this happiness! Yet,
 behold, we possess it; why then
 despair? I do not, so once more
 farewell!

Your's ever,

MARIA.

THE

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

HERE we are, my dearest Charlotte, I write this on English ground, last night we arrived safely at Dover, and suffered less by many degrees, than I did when I first set off on my travels ; the wind was perfectly fair, my sickness not intolerable, as then, and we were only fourteen hours on the sea. Lady Mortimer and my friend Caroline, desire me to present their best respects, and trust you will pardon their making me their prisoner without your permission ; they beg

C 5

me.

me to assure you it shall be their study to render my situation as agreeable as possible in every respect, and that a short time, they hope, will remove the obstacle, which at present makes it necessary to deny themselves the pleasure of asking the honour of my dear Marchmont's company, and yours, at Spring Park ; in the mean time intreat you to console Miss Neville, while in exile, by a constant correspondence ; this, my dear sister, is the substance of their obliging orders, on finding I was writing to you, and as the carriage is just coming to the door, I can add little else, --- this however, I must not neglect, which

is

is to beg you will indulge me with a full and particular account of yourself, and all that are dear to me, the moment you receive this billet; thank Heaven, though in exile, as my friend Lady Mortimer calls it, I shall no longer be denied the pleasure of hearing from you. Send my address to our Harriot, lest I should not, for some days, be able to write to the good girl. Ah! my poor Belmont, but I shall soon hear from him, nor will I refuse him the consolation of a few lines in return. I am called.

Farewel,

M. B.

C 6

MRS.

M R S. M A R C H M O N T

T O

M A R I A.

AND is it at last permitted me to write to my dear, my beloved Maria ? Ah ! with what joy do I hasten to profit by the long wished-for privilege. Good Heavens ! my dear creature, what have I not suffered on your account ? How many tears have I shed, while reflecting on the strange event that tore you from the arms of your afflicted Charlotte ? Even now, my love, I

weep; can I command my tears, when I consider you are not, even now, at liberty to bleſs me with your company? But let me not re-pine; you are well, you have fallen into the hands of noble, generous friends, I ought to be grateful to Heaven, for this unlooked-for conſolation: but I am not poſſeſſed of your happy flow of ſpirits, half your diſtreſſes would have killed me, yet you, Maria, are chearful, ſcarce the ſhadow of dejection appears in any of your letters; happy girl, and happier ſtill you will be, I truſt. I would gladly believe your adventures, as you call them, will end agreeable to our wiſhes,

whether

whether by the means proposed by your kind friend Lady Mortimer, I cannot say --- 'tis certainly in the chapter of possibilities, --- how far probable, is another affair, but we will indulge the fairest hopes; who knows what effects your charms may produce? Ah! I tremble for your feelings, my love, on the first interview with this formidable, this implacable Lord Bellmont; Heavens! Is it possible I should be compelled to write thus of one so very nearly related to us, but are we to blame, has he not from our infancy, by his cruel neglect, to call it by no harsher name, taught us to think of him as the most cruel of men?

men? Surely, surely, we have ever found him so. --- My loved Marchmont bids me say all that's affectionate for him, begs you will accept his heartfelt congratulations, *he* is fully persuaded Bellmont and you, will yet be happy, I have sent your address to our sweet Harriot, what joy will it give her to hear of your present situation. --- I have seen but little of our beloved Charles since you left us; though every post brings me anxious enquiries about his Maria, how will his affectionate heart be relieved, when informed you are once more in England. By this time he has got your note from Dover, for I

constantly

constantly dispatched all your letters to him, when my Henry and I had read them : --- in his last, he tells me, there is likely to be a promotion in his regiment, by which he gets the majority without purchase; this, you may be sure, gives him high spirits ; but I am told by a friend of his, he has another cause for them, which the fly creature has never mentioned to me himself, I have for some time suspected he had an attachment in the country which occasioned his making so little stay in London, and I find it is really the case ; but who the lady is, he either could not, or would not tell me ; I rather suspect
the

the latter, as I know they are bosom friends ; I would not press him on the subject, since if he is his confidante, he would ill deserve that distinction, were he to betray his secrets ; may the choice he makes, render him happy ! I know his taste, his delicacy of sentiment, too well, to fear his making an improper one ; even a fortune, however affluent, would not, I am persuaded, tempt him to give his hand to any woman to whom he could not also give his undivided heart ; this makes me perfectly easy, and convinces me she will merit the affectionate reception my heart will be ready to offer her whenever he thinks proper
to

to introduce her to me as a sister; but this may be a very distant event perhaps, though if it is to contribute to his felicity, as I trust it will, pray Heaven it may be soon.

You will, no doubt, expect a much longer letter from me, my love, than this is likely to be, but consider, though I am in the centre of gaiety, though I have considerably encreased the list of my acquaintance since you left me, and might have figured amongst them in all the amusements the town affords, yet such has been the painful state of my mind on your account,

count, that I could enjoy nothing ; how was it possible ? I have never since the sad event, I cannot even now think of without terror, been at any one public place ; even my Marchmont, with all his tender eloquence, could not prevail upon me : he wished it, in order, if possible, to dispel that melancholy, he could not behold without a thousand apprehensions. He feared the town air, if I continued to confine myself so much to the house, would injure my health ; to obviate this kind fear, I have every day taken an airing in the carriage, and made a few visits where I could do it without

without ceremony. This was all I could find spirits for. — Thank Heaven, we are to leave town in about a fortnight; the sweet shades and tranquillity of Rose-Hill, will, I hope, restore me to perfect health and chearfulness; though my mind can never be wholly at ease, till all my Maria's troubles are at an end; and when this will be, Heaven only knows. But let me not infect you with my dejection, it will now wear off. I shall frequently hear from you; you will write to me often, and set me an example of fortitude and resignation, which, I blush to say, I cannot follow as I ought.

I beg

I beg you will say all that's proper, for me, to Lady Mortimer, and Miss Percival ; you cannot exaggerate when on the subject of my gratitude to them for their generous, their affectionate attention to a sister so justly dear to me ; tell them I shall impatiently expect the permission they give me leave to hope for, of returning my thanks in person at Spring Park ; Mr. Marchmont will with pleasure accompany me there, on the first summons. Yet, however impatient I may be for that happiness, I am sensible a thousand prudential reason forbids my enjoying it at present. That the
 fortunate

(70)

fortunate effects we look for from
this self-denial, may be our reward
is the sincere prayer, of

Your's

Most truly,

C. M.

MARIA

M A R I A
 T O
 H E R S I S T E R.

WITH what joy should I have read my dear Charlotte's welcome letter, but for that melancholy, that sad dejection, which in spite of all your efforts to conceal it, is but too visible in every line ; I am alarmed, I am terrified lest your kind anxiety should injure your health. Do not, my beloved sister, give way to those foreboding fears ; am I not well ; and happy in the society of friends, whose

whose whole study is to render my stay with them agreeable. For my sake, for the sake of our amiable Marchmont, get the better of those apprehensions, that thus destroy your peace : all mine are vanished, I give you my honour ; secure in my Bellmont's tender affection, I can patiently wait till Fortune shall think proper to wear amore smiling aspect, and be assured she is too fickle to continue much longer her frowns ; I have not a doubt of being highly in her favour one of these days. Courage then, my sister, let us enjoy the present instance of her returning friendship. Why, you could not, my dear, write
in

in a more lamentable strain were I still an inhabitant of the dreary mansion I have so happily left; is not this a pretty considerable proof that she has not entirely given me up; and do you, can you believe having brought matters thus far, she will at last leave me in the lurch?--- No, no, Charlotte, *we* have talked ourselves into a certainty of a very different conclusion to the business; so make yourself easy, set your friendly heart at rest; reconcile yourself to my absence for a while: imagine me on a visit, forget the cause, and think only of our dear Charles. For my part, I am wild to know all, how,

and all about this attachment of his; had I been so lucky as to have stumbled upon that bosom friend, you mention, I fear my curiosity would have got the better of my good breeding; I should certainly have left no stone unturned till I had got the whole secret out of him; but you are so prudent, so discreet. — Yet I have behaved pretty well lately, myself, have not I, my dear, much better, I fear, than you did me the honour to expect? — It cost me some pangs, I can tell you, but as they would make a heroine of me, I determined to keep up the character; nothing like a convenient dash of pride in
a female

a female breast ; our old soul of a grandfather will applaud me for it, one day or other ; it will convince him I have some of his own blood in my veins. He shall find I had the spirit to scorn forcing myself into his haughty family, as much as he could scorn to have me there. By the by I am just as much a-kin to his worship now as I should have been then ; and all his plots cannot prevent it. This fauciness, Charlotte, is *entre nous*, observe ; I mean to treat him in a different style when we meet ; Miss Neville, the charming, the accomplished Miss Neville, would not be guilty of such impertinence for the world ;

you, my dear, with your weak
 nerves, and all those fine lady-like
 feelings, may tremble, if you
 please, at the thoughts of our in-
 terview ; but I — Ah ! would it
 were to come that — I mean to talk,
 sing, and play him out of his wits !
 --- He shall adore me, my dear
 --- How the deuce should he fail ?
 surely, my Bellmont may vie with
 him, or any other male creature
 on earth for taste and discernment,
 and does not he adore me ? it would
 be hard, indeed, if I could not sub-
 due the heart of an old Grecian,
 like his Lordship, after so incontesti-
 ble a proof of my charms. --- There
 child ! be a moment longer in the
 plaintives

plaintives if you dare --- behold in me, your younger sister, an example of all that's great and wise ! --- Though we have been here but three weeks, I have already had a pair of epistles from my Bellmont ; the first wrote I presume, the very day we parted, for it was here almost as soon as myself ; the other, he tells me, the day before he proposed setting off for England. I will say nothing of their charming contents ; you have had samples of love-letters so lately, that you conceive the nature of them. In those days your swain too, had his difficulties to embellish them with, as well as mine ; by this time, you may possibly have

seen him, Charlotte --- *Ah, me !* --- a sigh just then escaped me, as long as from here to Harley-Street. --- One cannot be quite perfect ; a tear too on my paper, as I live ! --- Nay, Miss Neville, this is past a joke ; another faux pas of that silly nature and you disgrace Maria Bellmont for ever --- Charlotte, my dear Charlotte, what would become of me, had Nature forgot to add good spirits to my other perfections ? Would you believe it, I could, at this moment, find in my heart to cry, --- yes, down right cry. --- Can this have happened because I fancied you might, by this time, have had a visit from him ---

im-

impossible! --- yet, so it certainly is, *that* thought has changed my note from F sharp, to B flat ---- amazing, "what dire effects from trivial causes spring!" --- I will fly to my harpsicord, play half a dozen lively airs, and return to you quite another creature.

Adieu!

IN CONTINUATION.

WORSE, and worse! ---- my dear. ---- The first thing that met my eye on the music desk was Auld Robin Grey; there was no resisting, it — I sat down, played and sung that sweet melancholy ditty till I

D 4.

could

could not see a note before me. ---

Ah ! (wisely thought I) *my* Jemmy too, is perhaps at this moment at sea, *his* ship may also become a wreck.

Charlotte, Miss Neville behaved exceedingly like a fool, so I judged it prudent to leave her to her devices ; I must also leave you, my love ; though I have not, in spite of all I have scribbled, said one word of either Lady Mortimer or her engaging niece ; I blush at my ingratitude ---- their kindness shall fill the first page of my next.

Adieu ! ever your's,

M. B.

MRS.

MRS. MARCHMONT.

TO

M. A. R. I. A.

MARIA, my dear ! my hopes revive ! Two cordials have been administered lately, that have proved efficacious beyond conception : the first, your charming, lively letter ; but never, no never, my dear, will you guess of what the other was composed --- I will not anticipate --- take therefore the particulars in form. — Last Wednesday, having just finished my first dose, and found

D 5

myself

myself infinitely relieved, I ran into my dear Henry's dressing room, that he might partake of my satisfaction ; but judge how agreeably I was surprized, to find your Bellmont there, just arrived from Dover. Your letter was in my hand — he knew it to be your writing at the first glance — “ From my Maria !” cried he, in a transport of joy --- “ Ah ! my dear Madam, tell me, how is my angel ? May I hope, you will indulge me with a sight of its contents ; does she mention her miserable Bellmont, does she relent ; will she permit me to see her ? O, speak to me, my best friend, say is the dear angel well ?”

“ For

“ For Heaven’s sake,” said I, smiling, “ a truce with your questions, you have already asked more than I shall be able to answer in a month ; there, take it, and read it aloud, that my Henry, for whom I brought it, not expecting to find you here, may also have his curiosity gratified, though not quite so eager as your’s.”

He took it, and with fervor pressing it to his lips, exclaimed, “ Ah ! why, why am I thus cruelly banished from the dear writer, why am I not permitted thus to press to my beating heart, the loved author ?” —

“ Come, come,” cried I, “ pray be content, and begin your lesson ; who knows what soft speeches you

may there meet with, addressed to yourself." --- "To me ! to me, did you say ! and from my Maria." He now began, as I desired him --- but made so many pauses, so many breaks, was so violently agitated, that I plainly saw we should not know one syllable he said ; so I even gave him permission to devour it to himself ; for it really could not be called reading. Never was there seen such a variety of emotions as his fine countenance displayed during the perusal, such expression, such animation ! He was just on the point of giving it to Mr. Marchmont, when the sound of a carriage driving to the door, and instantly

instantly a thundering rap drew us to the window --- a post-chaise and six, the horses foaming — “Heavens !” exclaimed I, “Who have we here ?” — In a moment out sprung my dear Charles, followed by an elegant figure in a riding-habit. — Down I flew, out of breath with joy, to receive them ; guessing, at once, this was the fair object of the attachment I had heard of, and that I was now to be introduced to a new sister. — He led her to me, “My dear Charlotte,” cried he, sweetly smiling, as he presented her with inimitable grace, “will you forgive this surprise, I flatter myself it will be an agreeable

agreeable one, when I present to you a sister who already loves, and is impatient to embrace you as such?" — Marchmont and your William now joined us, and found her in my arms; she was no sooner seen by Bellmont, than he started, and in the greatest astonishment he cried, "Good God! is it possible! Lady Ann Bosville!" ---- "Even so," replied her Ladyship, smiling, "But why this astonishment? Did you really believe, because you had the cruelty to refuse my hand, I was to vow it should never be in the offer of any other man?" "Ah! spare your railery," replied he, "and permit me to congratulate
your

your Ladyship on an event, that from my soul, I hope will render you the happiest of your sex." —

"Come, come, no apologies, my good friend," cried her Ladyship, "I forgive you, and congratulate you in my turn, for I verily believe you most cordially partake in my felicity; this, I confess, is an unexpected meeting, but I am persuaded not the less agreeable for finding me no longer in a situation to give you any farther trouble. Let us from this moment be good friends; though Fate, you see, never intended us for lovers." She presented her hand, in token of her sincerity,

sincerity, which he politely put to his lips. *How good I, just you must*

While this scene passed my Henry and I stood looking on, with unspeakable astonishment ; Bellmont, for the first time in his life, I really believe, felt himself in a situation rather awkward ; certain it is, I never saw him acquit himself with a worse grace : it was undoubtedly embarrassing, to the last degree. To have expressed his real feelings, which you may naturally suppose, were highly delightful, would have been indelicate. However, he was soon, by the conversation taking a different turn, relieved. Lady Ann
saw,

saw, and pitied his situation ; and by the most engaging behaviour restored him to his former ease ; this incident took off the formality of a first-meeting : and in half an hour we chatted with all the chearfulness of old friends.

Our new sister has an uncommon share of vivacity ; is exceedingly elegant in her person, and a countenance that at once prepossesses one in her favour ; a thousand engaging smiles play about the loveliest mouth I ever beheld. Charles adores her ; even your Bellmont, my dear, is not more enthusiastically enamoured of a certain person, who shall be nameless, than he is of Lady Ann.

Well,

Well, Maria, what say you to this piece of news!--- I take it for granted, it has thrown you into a most agreeable flutter. For my part, I have scarce been myself since their arrival. Here is one pretty considerable obstacle removed; I tell them, you will, no doubt, have the generosity to impute the whole affair to their desire to promote your felicity. We take the liberty to divert ourselves exceedingly, with the thoughts of what Lord Bellmont will think of the matter; and presume you will amuse yourself by the same subject. But pray think of our sly brother --- this is by no means a late attachment;

ment; they had vowed eternal constancy, and, I suppose, a thousand other vows of that nature, before he went to America. No wonder the fair one was so insensible to the charms of your poor Bellmont. All this Charles might have told us, but prudential reasons obliged him to keep the affair a secret; and indeed he justly enough observes, the knowledge of it could have made no change in your's, ~~now~~ he hopes things may take a more pleasing turn. His Lordship finding Bellmont is not the only person in the world, who would not implicitly obey his commands, may possibly look upon the fault in a less criminal

nal light, he may not, as you say, have a second Lady Ann at hand; and rather than hazard the total extinction of his noble family, may chance to let the youth take his own way to prevent so mortifying a catastrophe. Thus we reason upon the matter; whether his Lordship's have the same tendency, remains to be proved. But I am now a convert to your friend Hope; I am determined to believe all things will come about as we wish. Two most flattering circumstances have already taken place; your escape from the convent, and Lady Ann's marriage. It would be horrid indeed, as you say, were Fortune,

after

after doing so much, to leave you in the lurch.

In a few days we set off for Rose Hill; Charles and his fair bride have, at our earnest entreaty, agreed to accompany us: and what is still more delightful, have promised, if they can meet with a house in our neighbourhood, they will purchase it; that we may have the happiness of being as much together as possible. She has a noble family seat belonging to her, I find, in Devonshire; but I begged they would not think of residing at so great a distance from us; she sweetly replied, if her dear Charles would indulge her, nothing could contribute more

to

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to

to her felicity, than being constantly near his charming family, for whom she already felt the most tender affection. She asked a thousand questions about our dear Maria, longed impatiently for the happiness of your acquaintance ; begs me to bespeak your warmest friendship, adding with infinite vivacity, she thinks herself intitled to it in a particular manner, for the service she most sincerely hopes she has done you ; tell her, said she not to fancy me a being of no taste, as I fear she will do, for being blind to the charms of her Adonis ; assure her that next to her engaging brother, I think him the most accomplished

of men ; and happy was it for her, as well as myself, that I did not give him the preference, since in that case I should certainly have carried him off, in spite of the passion he is armed with for the fair one, he dared to think more deserving his heart than he thought me. Charles tells me she has forty thousand pounds, independant of her family, left her by an uncle when quite a child, besides the Mansion-House, which is an immense building, it seems, and though of the last age, is in thorough repair ; should the step she has just taken be forgiven, she will be entitled also to a very considerable estate ; but I believe they
are

are both perfectly satisfied without it. She has wrote, however, to her friends, as is usual on these occasions, though she owns she does not expect a very gracious answer; for your Bellmont, my dear, was the man they had set their hearts upon for her: but you see, she has with becoming spirit, I think, taken the liberty to choose for herself, and really with her fortune, it would have been hard not to have enjoyed that liberty.

Lady Mortimer must pardon me for taking so little notice at present of her kindness to my dear Maria; assure her I am extremely sensible of her goodness, and hope the time

is

is not far distant, when I shall have the honour to express it more fully in person; but this unexpected event so entirely engrossed me, that I could write on no other subject: this, I am persuaded, her Ladyship will readily believe.

Farewel, my love; I beg you will present our united respects to her and Miss Percival. Write to us instantly, and believe me

Ever your's,

C. M.

M A R I A

TO

MAJOR BELLMONT.

JOY ! joy to my beloved Charles,
and his lovely bride ! Accept a
thousand wishes for your mutual
happiness, from your Maria ; who,
though not at present possessed of such
felicity herself, as might be wished,
yet, at this delightful moment,
forgets her own cares, and with
heart-felt pleasure, enjoys that of
her amiable brother. What a sur-
prize !

prize ! what astonishment was I thrown into by Charlotte's epistle ! and how do I regret not being present at the scene she describes. —

Ah ! my poor Bellmont, I find, he made but a so so kind of figure on the occasion. To say the truth, *his* congratulations would come with an ill grace ; yet I cannot pardon Charlotte for her impertinent remark.

So you are absolutely, and to all intents and purposes married, my dear brother ! --- Well, there's no help for it ; I once hoped to have got the start of you, but my evil stars, you see, had otherwise decreed it. But do not triumph, Charles ----

it will be my turn next : and after all, 'tis proper enough, my elders should set me the sober example ; if I do not follow it, 'tis no fault of mine, you know. How impatiently do I long to embrace the fair partner of your felicity ! Pray assure her of it, and *order* her Ladyship to reserve a place in her friendship for me. I feel that I shall love the dear creature most tenderly. Have you heard how our grandfire finds himself on the delightful occasion ? --- there too, my curiosity is on the rack ; I die to know how he looked, how he felt when informed of an event, so very little expected. Ah ! Heaven grant it may produce a total
change

change in his sentiments, they want a thorough reformation sadly; were it but by way of variety, one would think the old soul would try to render himself a little more tractable. You have heard, Charlotte tells me, of the plan laid down to soften his flinty heart. The idea affords us a good deal of amusement; but I believe we might, with equal success, attempt, by the rays of my bright eyes, to soften the frozen regions of the North Pole. Yet, you see, Charles, their fires have done some execution; though alas! alas! to little purpose, hitherto. --- But all in good time; am I not a first-rate philosopher? ----- Lady Mortimer

and my friend Caroline, charge me to say a profusion of civil things in their name, though they have not the honour of being personally acquainted, but they are persuaded you must be a mighty decent kind of being, since you have the good fortune to be brother to so accomplished a creature as your most obedient. — Once more, my beloved Charles, let me from the bottom of my heart, congratulate you and my charming sister ; may Heaven bless you both, whatever is destined to be the fate of our unchangeably affectionate

MARIA BELLMONT.

MAJOR

MAJOR BELLMONT

TO

M A R I A.

THANKS to my dearest Maria,
 for her kind congratulations; well
 do I know they flow from a most
 affectionate heart. I have obeyed
 your orders, and my lovely Ann
 has placed you next myself in her
 affections: she is, my Maria, all
 my fondest hopes could wish. You
 may perhaps accuse me of reserve,
 my dear sister, in thus concealing
 from you, and our loved Charlotte,

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my

my attachment far the most engaging of women ; but do me the justice to acknowledge, 'tis the first offence of that nature ; and that I had reasons which compelled me to act in the manner I did : till now every sentiment of my heart has been open to both, and shall be from this time forwards, depend upon it. So pray forgive my apparent want of confidence in the best of sisters ; I hope this apology has made my peace. I write to you from Rose-Hill ; we arrived here last Tuesday, glad to quit the town, and be at liberty to enjoy ourselves in sweet tranquillity. I found our Charlotte's spirits much dejected, but

we

we contrive to amuse her, she is quite another creature since our return to the country; and the charming vivacity of my lovely Ann contributes not a little to make her forget the anxiety she has long felt on your account. You are naturally impatient to know what Lord Bellmont says to my carrying off the prize he destined for your lover; all I can tell you is, that he yesterday, I hear, left London. So whether he is now fighting at your feet, or rather at the fair Miss Neville's, you best can tell; I think 'tis more than probable, he would call on his friend Lady Mortimer, as her house is directly in his road, if he is going

to his own feat ; and my angel tells me 'tis a compliment, he seldom failed to pay her, in his way down.

May your sweet smiles, my dear Maria, produce the happy effects your generous friend so kindly wishes, should they fail, we will see what we can do without his consent. Happy you shall be, with the man of your heart, if in my power to make you so ; and I trust, it now is. However, we will not disappoint you of the triumph, which we hope awaits you. 'Tis now our turn to be impatient, so hasten and tells us whether his Lordship is really a visitor at Spring Park, My friend Bellment is a most

un-

ungovernable being ; we durst not leave him to govern himself, so brought him here with us ; he raves and storms like any hero ; but we shall make shift to manage him, I hope, till we resign that important charge to you ; and that, I trust, nay am certain, will be soon.

Farewel ! I fancy he is, at this moment, pouring forth his dolorous complaints on paper ; so you will get both our epistles by the same post. All here join me in every thing that's kind.

Your's ever most truly,

W. BELLMONT.

E 6.

M A R I A

M A R I A

T O

M R S. M A R C H M O N T.

GOOD Heavens, Charlotte! I tremble while I write, like an *absent* leaf, from head to foot, as some queer mortal once said to us, you know, I forget who. — As sure as death, Lord Bellmont, the dreadful Lord Bellmont, is at this precious moment, under the same roof with your Maria! --- Ah! positively I will not, cannot see him -- but I may never, perhaps, have an opportunity, he is dying, for ought I know. ---

M A R I A

R E

know.--- Whether from the mortifying disappointment he has lately met with, or what other cause, Heaven above knows, but he was taken exceedingly ill on the road, was obliged to stop at an inn, about a mile from hence, unable to proceed on his journey; not a soul with him, except men servants.

Independent of my friend's desire to have him for her guest at this time, civility obliged her to beg he would remove to her house, till recovered from his indisposition. The moment she heard of it, she ordered the carriage, and drove to the inn; the consequence is, he is actually here, and her Ladyship declares

clares exceedingly ill; she is fully
 persuaded the violent agitation of
 his spirits occasioned, as I said be-
 fore, by a late event has reduced
 him to this condition. Whether
 he mentioned the subject to her, I
 have not yet heard, for I have only
 seen her for a moment, since his
 arrival. So this is all I can tell you
 about the matter. But this I *can*
 tell you, I am frightened out of
 my wits;—see the end of all my
 boasted courage: but surely *his* will
 now be a little damped. So if we
 do meet, we shall be on more equal
 terms. Ah! Charlotte, 'tis past
 a joke, B. flat, is again my note.
 I have time for no more ---- the
 whole

whole house in a bustle. --- Would to the Lord I was now sitting quietly at Rose-Hill. Charge my Bellmont to pity me --- think of the wretch being so much at his ease, while his poor trembling dylcinia is as pale as a ghost with terror. Heavens ! what a face ! --- I have just peeped in my glass, and I give you my honour, it forbids all hopes of conquest. --- Adieu ! Adieu !

Don't forget to bid the creature *pity me.*

M. B.

THE

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

I Begin to breathe again, Charlotte, the dreaded interview is over, and yet wonderful to tell, I am alive, and I had almost said, merry. --- Heavens ! my dear, what flutters, what palpitations, &c. has your poor Maria suffered during the last three or four days --- see what it is, for a man to inspire one with such terrifying ideas of his character. Ah ! could he but have a peep at the grim, forbidding picture my imagination had drawn of him, he would never play the tyrant again while

while he lives; he was not able for the first two days to leave his apartment, happy was it for me, my dear, as during that time, I had an opportunity to compose my spirits, and regain some degree of courage; ah! my dear Lady Mortimer, cried I, when she had leisure to hear me, I shall never be able to go through with it, I cannot possibly see him, I shall absolutely expire the moment I set eyes on him, his stern looks will kill me, I am positive; never fear, my dear, replied she, the looks you dread, are by no means so terrible as your fancy has painted them; so far from it, I am fully persuaded, they
 will

will remove a great part of the prejudice, you too justly entertain against him. --- Oh ! tell me, cried I, has he yet mentioned my poor Bellmont ? Does he still retain those injurious, those cruel sentiments, against the most amiable of men ? Say, my dear friend, did he enter with you on the subject of Lady Ann ? Compose yourself, my love, replied she, observing me exceedingly agitated, sit down, and I will gratify your curiosity ; he has talked to me without reserve ; and freely acknowledges the shock he received, on finding she had by her marriage with your brother, destroyed all those hopes he had so long

long cherished, was the undoubted cause of his present disorder. — No doubt, my Lord said, I, 'tis a very great disappointment; but give me leave to observe, however anxious your Lordship was for an alliance between her ladyship and Mr. Bellmont, 'tis plain, had he been equally so, it could not have taken place, since, I am informed, his heart has been engaged for several years to another; and with so fine an independent fortune, as she is mistress of, can we suppose she would give her hand to any, except the man of her choice? I tell you, Lady Mortimer, cried he, impatiently interrupting me, he might have been
that

that man, had he thought proper to follow my advice, who more likely than himself to make a girl forget a childish attachment, formed before she knew what she was about? He is an ungrateful, unthinking boy, and severely shall he be mortified for his unpardonable folly --- I might possibly as things have turned out, have forgiven *that*, granting Lady Ann had absolutely refused him, which, upon my soul, I can hardly believe, had he paid her the attention, she no doubt expected, and had a right to expect; but he did not. --- However, I might, I say, have forgiven his being blind to her attractions; had

had he not been so clear-sighted to those of a girl, he well knew, I never would suffer him to be connected with ; and, but for this designing girl, I am certain he might now have been the husband of Lady Ann ; --- you have, no doubt, heard of this ridiculous affair, continued he, but I shall take effectual care to prevent his playing the fool ; here he stopped, rather abruptly, not intending, I fancy, to have gone quite so far, I took no notice of his last sentence, but without appearing too much interested in the business, said, I thought it hard to condemn Mr. Bellmont for the choice his heart had made, if
want

want of fortune was the only objection to the young lady, this surely cannot be an object to your Lordship, pardon me, Lady Mortimer, however large my fortune may be, that of Lady Ann was an object, and a considerable one too; but that is not my only objection, I have others that are insurmountable, and as a proof that it is not, had he, as I wished, paid his addresses to the lady I chose for him, and had she really rejected him, which is not the case, I swear to you, I would not have been against his pleasing his own inclinations in the choice of another, had she not been worth six-pence, except the
 very

very girl he has made choice of ;--- he could not but know this, he could not, but know also, my objections to her, and what then, am I to think ? Is it not plain, he is so far from desiring to please me, or caring for my approbation, that one one would swear he had picked her out on purpose to prevent the possibility of it --- this said Lady Mortimer, is all that passed, on the subject, my dear, and though not very flattering to our hopes, let us not despair, we have, at least, his Lordship's word for it, that want of fortune is not an insurmountable objection : take courage, then, my love, he proposes coming down to

the drawing-room this afternoon, put on all your smiles and graces, and my life for it, you will soften that heart, you have pronounced so flinty ; ah ! said I, what will it avail ? He may find charms in Miss Neville, perhaps, but, --- pho, pho, let us start no more difficulties, leave something to chance, go, my love, go to Caroline, talk the matter over cheerfully, and let me find you ready to meet us at the tea-table ; --- I took her advice, we walked for an hour in the garden, and agreed he should find me at the harpsichord, rather than sitting stuck up in form, with my hands before me, the bustle, whether of getting up
 2 from

from it, on his entrance, or being prevailed upon, by him, to proceed, which, 'twas mighty natural to suppose would be the case, would take off the solemnity I so much dreaded ; — the important moment at length arrived, down I sat, and choosing a song so soft, so plaintive, that it would have melted the heart of a savage, I began, and really found myself so interested in it, that Caroline declared I never sung half so well in my life ; --- the door now opened, and in he came, but as good fortune would have it, I actually did not know it, till he had been at the back of my chair for some minutes ; — what an en-

Vol. II. F . . . chanting

chanting voice, cried he, at last, what softness, what melting sounds proceed from those rosy lips : --- I started in the greatest confusion, on hearing his voice, so near me in spite of all the resolution I fancied I had acquired, I made an effort to rise, but he, with the best grace imaginable took my hand, and replacing me, begged I would so far indulge him as to finish my song. Ah ! Charlotte, my breath was absolutely gone : I obeyed, however, glad of this pretence, not to meet his eyes, the difference of my performance, was no doubt, imputed to the flurry his warmly expressed approbation had occasioned,

fioned ; I soon, however, got so far
 the better of it, as to gain a second
 compliment, and having finished
 my task, and a severe task it was :
 I fear, said he, Miss Neville, (for
 Lady Mortimer, had, in a half whif-
 per told him my name, while I was
 playing) I shall be frequently
 tempted to encroach on your good
 nature, while I have it in my
 power to be so charmed ; and I
 think, if I may credit that lovely
 countenance, you will not refuse to
 gratify me ; your Lordship does
 me a great deal of honour, replied
 I, and I am happy to find my coun-
 tenance corresponds so perfectly
 with my sentiments, I have not

the vanity to believe I merit all those praises so politely bestowed upon me, but if my performance, such as it is, can afford your Lordship any degree of pleasure, I beg you will freely command me ; --- while I said this, his eyes were intently fixed on my face,—happily for me, the tea and coffee was brought in,—I was relieved from part of my painful embarrassment, I had not, till now, had courage to look at him, but then ventured to raise my eyes ; --- Charlotte, my dear Charlotte, Lady Mortimer was perfectly right, I found nothing of that forbidding haughtiness in his appearance, I had figured to myself ; on
the

the contrary, his person is uncommonly graceful, his countenance, though noble, and commanding, is engaging beyond expression, I cannot tell you how I was affected while gazing on him; I felt a tear steal down my cheek, --- Ah! thought I, is it possible a form so pleasing can contain a heart so cruel, so unforgiving; in his conversation he is chearful, and polite, and before he retired I had so far conquered my fears, as to join in it with tolerable ease, though he is considerably better, he still found himself unable to spend the evening with us, but before he went to his apartment, he begged I would in-

dulge him with another song; I instantly obeyed, and as I found he had a taste for the plaintive, sung Amanda; --- the words are elegant, and so perfectly expressive of my own situation, that I believe I did great justice both to them and the sweet air they are set to; — again he praised my voice, my manner, and my execution in the most flattering terms, declared he could listen to me for ever, that I was the most enchanting little Syren he had ever met with; I now look upon my indisposition, said he, to Lady Mortimer, as a most fortunate circumstance, since it has procured me the pleasure of this lovely

lovely creature's acquaintance, I shall insist on your returning my visit, you must bring her to the castle. I have one of the finest harpsichords there in England, unless you promise me this favour, I can tell you, you will not easily get quit of my troublesome company; what say you, Miss Neville, will you condescend to visit an old man? With infinite pleasure, my Lord, replied I, and since you have done me the honour to give me so flattering an invitation, Lady Mortimer must pardon me should she find me very impatient to pay you my respects; I will take care to have the voice your Lordship is pleased

to find so agreeable in perfect order, that it may not discredit the harpsichord, and we will sing from morning till night ; all I fear is, that my vanity will be so encreased, for every female, you know, is born with more or less, that I shall thereby forfeit the good opinion your Lordship honours me with at present ; the praises you have already bestowed upon me, are enough to turn a more steady head than I dare pretend to ; — Oh ! be under no apprehensions, replied he, were that voice, I so justly admire, your only perfection, 'tis possible there might be some danger ; but I have also discovered

an

understanding which will infallibly preserve you ; he now wished us good night, and left us charmed with his engaging behaviour. Lady Mortimer and Caroline gave me joy, were certain I had gained the conquest so ardently desired ; Ah ! cried I, 'tis not Maria, who has gained it, alas ! I fear, I shall find a formidable rival in Miss Neville ; would to Heaven, she had never been admitted to our party, most sincerely do I now wish we were fairly quit of her, yet I tremble for the moment of her departure, I fear it will prove a melancholy day to your poor friend ; never fear, my love, we will contrive to give her

an honourable dismissal, and, I am confident Maria Bellmont will amply make up for her loss ; thus, Charlotte, our affairs rest at present : Heaven knows how they will end ; certain it is, they now wear a very promising appearance, but the denouement, the unravelling this plot of ours --- there's the rub, my dear, I shall never hold out to the end of the fifth act, — farewell, with me success ; say a thousand kind things for me to your delightful Cotterie, and believe me,

Your's,

M. B.

MRS.

MRS. MARCHMONT.

TO

M A R I A.

AH! Maria, what a trying situation is your's, my love, — wish you success, yes, my dear, you have the most fervent wishes of friends to whom your happiness is dearer than their own; I cannot express the agitations we were all in, while reading the account of your first interview with Lord Bellmont, so violent were my emotions, that, but for my salts, I should certainly have fainted; ah! why my dear

F 6

Charles,

Charles, cried I, was I prevailed upon to suffer the amiable girl to encounter such a scene; delighted, as he now is with her, who can answer for the mortification that may yet await her, the idea is really more than I am able to support; how then will the dear creature be able to support the reality? Be composed, replied my Marchmont, kindly taking my hand, remember, my love, our Maria has a greater share of spirits than you possess, look at her letter again, and see with what ease, what cheerfulness she writes, — the timidity, she could not but feel at first, is already worn off; the praises so justly bestowed upon her

her by a person from whom she had so little reason to expect it, could not fail to produce this happy effect ; be easy then, and depend upon it, the little Syren, as his Lordship calls her, will effectually gain his heart, and that once gained, what have we not to hope. Your adoring Bellmont happened to be out when I received it ; when he returned, I was tolerably composed, I gave it him ; but great as my emotions had been, they were nothing to his ; I was now, in my turn, obliged to exert all my eloquence ; he was distracted while reading what you tell us of your terrors, your painful apprehensions, but when he

found

found how happily your fears were dispelled, how highly charmed his Lordship appeared to be with your company, his transports were no less ungovernable ; in short, my love, our feelings for you take off our attention from every other object, --- we think, we talk of nothing else, nor of nothing else can I write, and such is my impatience to hear from you again, that I cannot even do that to any purpose, so I may as well bid you adieu. Adieu, then, my dear creature ; success attend your innocent deception,

Prays your,

C. M.

M A R I A.

M A R I A.

T O

MRS. M A R C H M O N T

W H A T a poor timid soul art thou, my dear Charlotte ; why, I made no doubt but my epistle would have banished all your fears, and that I should, instead of your lamentable answer, have received the united congratulations of your whole society on my approaching happiness ; but some people are never to be pleased, pray do you set down the conquest I have already gained

gained as nothing --- well, child, since that has not set your anxious heart at rest, let me try if what I have now to say will produce that effect ---- *my* charming Lord Belmont is still here, my dear, tell your ungovernable charge to make up his mind for an event, that may, unless prepared for it, perhaps surprize him more than one would wish. I am not positively certain, whether I may not change the object of my affection. I begin to think the easiest way to settle matters amicably, will be to marry his Lordship, and thus put an end to all farther trouble. The day after that on which I was first introduced

duced to him, he did not come down to breakfast; but when we had finished ours his gentleman entered, with his Lord's compliments to Lady Mortimer, begging the favour she would honour him with her company for half an hour in his apartment, as he wished to have some conversation with her. I will wait upon his Lordship immediately, replied she---then turning to me, Maria, my dear, can you guess what is to be the subject of our conference? I'll lay my life he has been dreaming of you, my dear, and sends for me to interpret the meaning---trust me, I will be faithful to your interest---I smiled, and

and away she went --- Caroline and I sat in the utmost impatience, forming ten thousand conjectures, each more whimsical than the other --- at last down she came. I could scarcely breathe, to ask her a single question was absolutely impossible, my looks, however, were abundantly expressive, --- what, no curiosity, cried her Ladyship, not a word to say? Well, then, I must speak all myself I find --- 'twas as I guessed, my dear, --- we have talked of nothing but you; and I really thought I should never get away, so much was his Lordship interested in the subject, — ah, for Heaven's sake, tell me, cried I, trembling with

with emotions, what have I to hope? --- every thing you can wish. I think, upon my honour, replied Lady Mortimer, I am persuaded natural affection, though unknown to him, must have a share in the tender concern, and attachment he has conceived for you. Pray, Lady Mortimer, said he, when we were seated, excuse this liberty; I would have attended you at breakfast, but before I allowed myself to be farther captivated with your lovely young friend, wished to ask you a few questions about her --- may I presume to ask who she is, what is her family, people of fashion they must be? this I cannot doubt,

from

from the education they have given her; her manner, her conversation clearly prove it; but I wish to be particularly informed. I feel an interest in all that concerns her, that really astonishes myself; she is the most engaging girl I ever met with. I am very happy, my Lord, replied I, that it is in my power to give you the satisfaction you desire; I am perfectly acquainted with every particular relating to my charming friend; your Lordship does her but justice. I really know not her equal for every accomplishment both of mind and person. Her family, my Lord, is one of the best in the kingdom; but as her
 father

father was a younger brother, it was not in his power to leave her a fortune equal to her merit or his tender affection ; her parents are both dead. She has, however, such a competency, as enables her to appear in the stile she has been brought up in, though not so much, perhaps, as will procure her the establishment in life to which she is formed to do honour. Beauty and merit in these days, my Lord, are not the requisites sought for in a wife. The present age, I am sorry to say, pay too little attention to their true interest, as to set a proper value on them ; not but Miss Neville might, more than once,

have

have married greatly to her advantage, had she studied only the figure it would have enabled her to make in the eye of the world. But she has a delicacy of sentiment; she has a heart and understanding, my Lord, that I fear--- or rather let me say, I hope will never suffer her to be governed in that important affair by views merely of interest—I hope it I say. For what degree of real felicity can people promise themselves, where a mutual attachment is wanting, let their wealth be great as fortune can bestow? — does not every day's experience shew us the consequences of these ill-judged, these unnatural marriages?

marriages? — though no one of my sweet young friend's best visitors, and she has many, my Lord, can more sincerely desire to see her placed in that line of life in which she is formed to shine. Yet, believe me, I should be the last to advise giving her hand to the first man in the kingdom, could she not also give him her heart: — this, my dear, continued my kind Lady Mortimer, was my reply, you will guess my reasons for going so far beyond my commission. I could have answered the questions asked me in fewer words no doubt; but chose to take so fair an opportunity to touch on some particulars, which
being

being pretty applicable to his Lordship's conduct, I hoped would reach his heart, nor was I, I believe, mistaken. I lost not a single moment of his countenance during my prudent lecture. I observed he was exceedingly agitated at many parts of it ; finding I had finished my speech --- “ You have really,” said his Lordship, after a pretty long pause, “ interested me greatly in the fate of your young friend ; I am persuaded she must be of a good family ; she is a charming girl, and though I cannot but approve of your sentiments in regard to marriage, yet, my dear Madam, there are a thousand things which render it necessary

cessary amongst people of rank, to form connections on those principles you so severely condemn; those tender attachments you talk of may have their use where fortunes are but moderate, it may possibly supply its place in those sentimental pairs you describe; and it is but fair they should enjoy ideal happiness, where the reality is denied them." "Your Lordship," said I, smiling, "cannot now be serious." "Upon my soul, I am," replied he, "and I believe I speak the sense of the world in general; yet, thus much I confess, I think there may be instances in which a young fellow might be pardonable, were he

to forget his true interest, and fancy the attachment you are so great a friend to, might do as well ; but I believe they are very scarce ; Miss Neville, I own, seems to be one of those dangerous objects, she is a most fascinating little creature, and I fear is born to make some man or other play the fool" --- " But your Lordship, cried I, interrupting him, " has confessed his folly would not be unpardonable." " Why, much might be said," replied he, smiling, " in his justification, I own, and so entirely has she charmed me, that from my soul, I wish she may soon meet with a man worthy of her, who is inclined to do justice to her merit

merit." "Suppose," said I, smiling, in my turn, and resolved to make the very most of the opportunity so fortunately offered me, ---

"suppose, my Lord, Mr. Belmont, for instance, were that man."

"Name him not," cried he, with great warmth, "Name him not --- he does not deserve her ; by Heavens, ill as he has used me, such *was* my affection for him, that had he shewn so good a taste, I think --- yes, Lady Mortimer, I think I should have been fool enough to forgive him ; but he has justly fortified every hope of that nature, --- *he* has thought proper to make a choice to which he well knew I never

would, never could be reconciled ;
 pardon me if I drop the subject,
 it affects me too much." --- " Will
 your Lordship, in your turn, forgive
 me, if I take the liberty to mention
 a whim that has this instant struck
 me ?" --- " Not if it relates to that
 ungrateful boy," cried he, rising
 in great agitation, " I will hear
 nothing --- I will do nothing, either
 for him or about him." " Suppose I
 am going to talk of my young friend,"
 said I, " surely your Lordship will
 not so far mortify me, as to turn a
 deaf ear." " Forgive me, Lady
 Mortimer, if I have failed in the
 respect your Ladyship is entitled to ;
 I cannot keep my temper when" ---

" Well,

“ Well, well, my Lord,” cried I, “ we will change the subject ; that is, not absolutely change it neither, but we will add a more pleasing one to it ; I must positively mention the whim I was going to speak of before. You know I am apt to take strange fancies into my head sometimes. What say you to an experiment ? Your Lordship is enraged at the attachment Mr. Bellmont has formed without your approbation --- suppose we try to break it. ----- A proof of inconstancy in young men, now-a-days, is not one of the wonders of the age. --- Who knows what Miss Neville’s charms may do ? --- add to this, your Lord-

ship's positive refusal to consent to his match, with his present mistress. --- I am more than half persuaded, these two powerful motives, her attractions, I mean, and your Lordship's approbation, would banish the other from the place she now holds in his heart. Your Lordship wishes to break off his present unworthy connection, and no doubt is desirous to see him form another, more agreeable to your inclinations: fortune, is certainly no object; Where then can he make a more eligible choice; and where can we find a lady more likely to render him unfaithful to the choice he has already

ready

ready made? Except fortune, as I observed before to your Lordship, Miss Neville, has every perfection you can possibly desire, her family in every respect equal to his own."

He listened to me with more calmness than I expected; but said I had taken things for granted, to which he had by no means agreed. —

"Greatly as I admire your friend," said he, "I cannot so easily give up the advantage of wealth; but suppose I should be tempted to overlook that circumstance, take my word for it, Lady Mortimer, he has an obstinacy, a perverseness in his nature, that will effectually frustrate your plan, I am persuaded, were it

merely to shew his independent, his ungovernable spirit." — " Shall we put him to the trial," cried I, interrupting him, " indulge me, my Lord, I really think they would make the most elegant couple in England ; I own I have so great a partiality for Miss Neville, that I think, she merits even the honour of being allied to your Lordship, and this is certainly paying her a very high compliment, since it is an honour any woman in the kingdom might glory in. Come, come, my Lord, let us try what can be done ; the more I think of it, the more I am confident my scheme will produce the happiest effects.

I must

I must positively have my own way. Your Lordship may some time hence, perhaps, repent not taking my advice, should you find Mr. Bellmont has really married the person you are so averse to ; let us try to wean his affections from her. 'Tis true he rejected Lady Ann, but have we not every reason to believe he saw he was wholly indifferent to her ? nay, we now find, had he, as your Lordship wished, been seriously attached to her, he must have met with a disappointment to his hopes, since her heart was engaged to another. Miss Neville's charms to my, perhaps partial, eyes appear absolutely irresistible.

fiftible. Shall I venture to give
 Mr. Bellmont an invitation? — He
 can suspect nothing ----- he is my
 son's particular friend, I expect him
 home in a few days; he should de-
 sire his company, they have not
 met since their return from abroad,
 where their acquaintance com-
 menced." "Not while I am here,
 positively," cried his Lordship, "I
 will not condescend to see him."---
 "Come, come, my Lord, be more
 gracious --- I am certain it would
 give you pleasure to be reconciled
 to him, I know it, by the pain
 you feel for being thus at variance;
 I will venture to be still bolder in
 my demands, write to him yourself,
 my

my Lord, make his obedience with your commands to pay his addresses to Miss Neville, the conditions of pardon for all past offences."——

"Good God, Lady Mortimer! what is it you ask of me!" "I ask, my Lord, what my heart tells me will be productive of the highest felicity to all parties; who knows but the affliction I am certain he has suffered during your Lordship's displeasure, may have long since weakened this ill-placed attachment; reflection may have shewn him the folly of it, nay the natural inconstancy of our nature, may possibly by this time have done the business; Depend upon it, he is not

so void of ambition as to prefer love and a cottage, to your Lordship's favour, and a woman accomplished and beautiful as your new favourite." — "Lady Mortimer," cried he, smiling, "you are really a most powerful advocate; I would not wish you to plead in a cause against me where I much interested. I cannot resist your friendly eloquence; I believe you mean it well; I have no doubt of your friendship. I did not believe I could so patiently have talked on this subject --- I yield: — I will indulge you, it shall be all your own way; I will not do things by halves.

This

This very night I will write to him. But take my word for it, his answer, should he deign to answer at all, will plainly prove you have been all this time building castles in the air; I will give him the chance you desire of being reinstated in my favour."

Charlotte, my dear Charlotte, this was more than my spirits could support, ----- I fell lifeless on my chair. — My kind Lady Mortimer was exceedingly alarmed --- Caroline no less so. A few drops, however, and being led into the air, soon recovered me; but can you, can any mortal, conceive what I felt

I felt at this moment ? impossible !
 Ah ! my Bellmont, will he be reluctant to obey the summons ? ---
 Good Heavens ! how shall I be able to bear the delightful meeting without betraying the secret of my heart ! Ah ! Charlotte, now indeed, I deserve your pity. I am in a situation there is no describing, or rather was at that moment ; for much has passed since I began this long letter, you may well believe I could not write it all at one sitting, I began it yesterday ; I have seen his Lordship since, but must leave what passed till another opportunity.

Perhaps

Perhaps the important letter from him may go by the same post.

Adieu ! Adieu !

M. B.

THE

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

AH! Charlotte, my dear Charlotte, I tremble, I die with apprehensions when I look forward to the dreaded eclaircissement that must be made, in spite of all my terrors; and, however flattering my present situation, what have I not to fear when that hour arrives! Can I, dare I hope that the highly favoured Miss Neville, when changed into poor Maria, will continue to be thus smiled upon, thus careffed? — Alas! alas! — the severity with which his Lordship mentioned her
to

to Lady Mortimer, persuades me his prejudice against her is immovable. — But let me, if possible, hope better things; 'tis strange I should now despair, when we have gained a point, greater by far, than we once could have believed possible; but much, too much, is yet to be done, and with too great reason, I fear, the most difficult part of the business.

I think I concluded my last at the period of recovering from my swoon. — His Lordship gave us his company at dinner; I was obliged, and indeed with too much truth, to complain of a slight headache, to cover the embarrassment

I now

I now felt in his presence. He expressed the most tender concern, insisted on helping me at table to what he judged least likely to increase it; made me sit next to him, that he might have me more immediately under his care. This obliging behaviour really removed my disorder, my spirits by degrees returned; before the cloath was removed, I was able to enter into conversation with my usual chearfulness. You may well believe I exerted all my little talents to confirm the favourable opinion he already entertained of me; and I had the pleasure to observe my endeavours were not in vain. — Charlotte I am really
of

of Lady Mortimer's way of thinking; the partiality he has conceived for me, I am persuaded, arises in a great measure from a sympathy, — a something I cannot clearly express; but, in short, I cannot fancy it would, had I not been by every tie of nature so justly entitled to it. --- I often, while he gazes on my face, which I frequently observe him do, fancy he discovers a resemblance there of my beloved father; you know I was thought strikingly like him; he certainly does, but 'tis plain it has raised no suspicion in his breast, or he would not treat me with this distinguished kindness. When we retired to the drawing-

drawing-room, “ Your Lordship’s tendernefs” faid I, “ I fear, prevents your honouring me with your commands, my head is now fo well, that I am ready to obey you with the greateft pleasure ; fhall I fit down to the harpfichord, my Lord ? you fee my vanity is not yet fully gratified.” He politely took my hand, and leading me to it, faid, the fine talents I was miftrefs of, were better beftowed on me, than on any female he had ever yet met with ; “ this eafe, this graceful manner has a thoufand charms unknown to thofe filly girls who fo far from thus *offering* to gratify their friends, generally make fo much parade, and fo many

many insignificant apologies before they can be prevailed upon, that I very seldom venture to ask the favour, lest I should be disgusted, by what they, I suppose, fancy good breeding."--- I bowed to this flattering compliment, and taking my seat, sung a variety of songs, but found he was particularly charmed with the simple plaintive stile of the Scotch airs; to the words of them, too, he said, he was extremely partial, and turned to several, as peculiarly fine; I paid him no compliment, when I assured him I agreed perfectly with him on the subject. For you, Charlotte, know I delight in them; and of course, enter pretty well into their

their

their spirit. — He again declared himself enchanted, that he had never heard them sung with so much true taste; that in short, he found he should never be able to tear himself from Lady Mortimer's; her only resource, therefore, added he, smiling, and looking at her Ladyship with peculiar meaning, will be to go with me to the Castle, and take you with her ---- what say you, Lady Mortimer, if you are tired of my company, order our carriages, and let us set off." —

"Pardon me, my Lord," replied she, "I am too good a judge of what constitutes my pleasure, to part
 with

with you so soon ; if your Lordship will honour us with your company till we are tired of it, I believe you will not visit the Castle in a hurry ; but this I will really promise, and keep my word, if your Lordship will permit me, when your Lordship is tired of us, we will with pleasure accompany you there."——

"Still," said he, "the poor deserted Castle stands in the same predicament ; however we will let it take its chance for the present ; tire, or not tire, I must be there soon ; and since I have the promise of your company, have nothing to regret."

Are

Are you reconciled to him, Charlotte, does not his engaging manner compel you in a great measure to forget his cruelty to us ; I am utterly astonished to think he could ever be capable of it ; but perhaps age has blunted the edge of that pride, that haughty disposition by which he was certainly governed when a younger man ; at least I can account for the change no other way : and a change there undoubtedly must be, for it appears impossible he could now act in the unforgiving manner he then did. — Yet, how I talk ! Ah ! Charlotte, the pleasure I at present feel in his company,

company, the continual praises he bestows upon me makes me forget, that he, at this very moment, believes me banished from my friends, my country, and that too, by his ungenerous means !

Ah ! Heavens, what amazing inconstancy appears in his character ! I fear, I fear all is not as it should be, and that all my fond hopes will, ere long, be fatally blasted.

I was, as you may believe, on the rack of impatience, to know whether his Lordship had really wrote to my charming Bellmont, and the first opportunity, asked Lady Mortimer. She could not then inform me ; but this morning she

VOL. II.

H

told

Are you reconciled to him, Charlotte, does not his engaging manner compel you in a great measure to forget his cruelty to us ; I am utterly astonished to think he could ever be capable of it ; but perhaps age has blunted the edge of that pride, that haughty disposition by which he was certainly governed when a younger man ; at least I can account for the change no other way : and a change there undoubtedly must be, for it appears impossible he could now act in the unforgiving manner he then did. — Yet, how I talk ! Ah ! Charlotte, the pleasure I at present feel in his company,

company, the continual praises he bestows upon me makes me forget, that he, at this very moment, believes me banished from my friends, my country, and that too, by his ungenerous means!

Ah! Heavens, what amazing inconstancy appears in his character! I fear, I fear all is not as it should be, and that all my fond hopes will, ere long, be fatally blasted.

I was, as you may believe, on the rack of impatience, to know whether his Lordship had really wrote to my charming Bellmont, and the first opportunity, asked Lady Mortimer. She could not then inform me; but this morning she

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H

told

told me he had actually sent it off this very day.

Ah ! my sister ---- give him this important information ; he will no doubt go to London, as it will be sent to him there of course.

I can write no more --- my agitations at this moment are painful to an unspeakable degree. I must try to compose myself. ----- What will become of me when my Bellmont appears !

Adieu !

M. B.

LORD

L O R D B E L M O N T

T O

WILLIAM BELLMONT, ESQ.

YOU are indebted to the intercession of a friend for this condescension, my respect and esteem for her would not permit me to refuse her request; this friend is Lady Mortimer. At her Ladyship's earnest desire I have, contrary to a resolution I believed nothing could alter, been prevailed upon to make a proposal to you, which I am fully persuaded you will, with your *usual attention to my peace of mind*, reject, as you have hitherto done all those

H 2

I ever

I ever made, however advantageous for you, but I press you not--- do as you think proper--- it is this, there is a young lady here, whose numberless attractions have so far won upon my affections, that I wish to give her, by your means, a title to my rank and fortune; those she merits by her uncommon worth; but could I confer them upon her by giving her to any other man, I certainly would not have made choice of one who has proved himself so little worthy this distinction. If you can conquer the ridiculous folly you have been too long guilty of, set off immediately for Spring-Park, try to gain this
 young

young lady's affections, and I may then, perhaps, forget --- or at least forgive, your past ingratitude, and and bestow her upon you ; but I will not so far injure her depend upon it, as to throw her away upon a fellow who cannot, with his hand, give her an undivided heart : so presume not to obey this summons, unless you are sensible you can act up to the conditions offered, --- reject them if you think proper, but in that case I here inform you, this is the last intercourse you are ever to expect with the very justly insensd

H 3

BELLMONT.

M A R I A

T O

M R S. M A R C H M O N T.

OH, Charlotte, --- my Bellmont, my charming Bellmont is actually here --- he arrived this morning. Prepared as I was to expect him, I thought I should have expired when I saw him get out of his chaise, --- he no doubt had his difficulties as well as myself --- we were all in the drawing-room. The moment he entered, he, with a grace I cannot describe, went up to Lord Bellmont, and respectfully taking his hand, bent his knee --- rise, Sir, said

said my Lord, and pay your respects to that Lady, pointing to Lady Mortimer; to her your thanks are due; he turned to her, and pressing her hand to his lips; thanked her in the most polite terms for the obligation her intercession with his Lordship had conferred upon him, in thus gaining him permission, to be once more admitted to his presence,---she smiled in the most obliging manner, and then introduced him to me and Caroline, --- good G—d! Charlotte, think what were my feelings at that moment; --- this, indeed, was a trial which required all my boasted fortitude and courage-- for a consider-

able time we were very indifferent company. Lady Mortimer and her daughter were the only two who could, you may believe, behave with tolerable ease; the presence of a *stranger* might be supposed to make me a little reserved. Lord Bellmont had still some degree of stateliness remaining of course, or perhaps *chose* to let himself down by degrees; and as for my poor Bellmont, he was not, you know, to be *struck at first sight* by my perfections. Engaged as his affections were supposed to be elsewhere, this would have appeared highly unnatural --- so you see here were three of our party compelled to act
a part

a part foreign to their real sentiments, three I say; for I am positive his Lordship concealed a part of those we felt in favour of the poor penitent before him. At length, however, we began to be less constrained in our behaviour; my Lord set us the example, and we were very glad to follow it, yet though more easy, I had not courage once to meet the eyes of Belmont. Whether he took a peep now and then at me Heaven knows, nor had I an opportunity to ask the important question, till happily relieved by his Lordship's going up to dress. --- Lady Mortimer and Caroline looking at their watches,

blush

H 5

and

and at me with a smile, said, they fancied they had left themselves little enough time for theirs; and for a much kinder purpose, I well knew, also left the drawing-room;--- before the door was half shut, my impatient lover was at my feet,---ah, my adored Maria, cried he; and ah, Bellmont, cried I, who would ever have guessed that I should have seen you in that posture? By the express commands of your Lordship, have you not proved yourself an inconstant being, thus at the first order to give up the poor Maria, for her rival, Miss Neville; rise, however, and compose those unruly spirits of thine, lest we should

should be seen ; remember, though you are to fall desperately in love with me, yet it must not be quite so suddenly as that comes to, --- still the same charming vivacity, cried he, pressing my hand with fervor to his heart, --- oh, my Maria, no more of your ah's, I beseech you, said I, smiling; had I given way to them, the vivacity you observe, would never have been able to conquer, as it has done, the heart of Lord Bellmont : so do not destroy it by the recollection of past misfortunes, I have much yet to do with it ; --- what an angel art thou, cried he, clasping me in his arms, in spite of

all my frowns; by Heaven's I be-
 lieve Nature never formed your
 equal, --- no, certainly, said I, dis-
 engaging myself. I hope this is
 not the first time you have been
 convinced of this incontestable fact.
 Why even Lord Bellmont is of
 that opinion, who has not known
 my wonderful perfections half so
 long; but let this suffice at present.
 I now must repair to my toilet,
 and it will not be much amiss if
 you follow my example: I will
 contrive to have another chat with
 you some time to-day, and pray let
 me find you in your sober senses,
 that we may seriously talk over the
 business we are engaged in. Away
 I tripped,

I tripped, but not till he had again pressed me to his bosom; and I verily believe, though this, Charlotte, is for your private ear, touched my cheeks with his lips, contrary to all rules of decorum no doubt; but 'tis past, and there's no help for it. At dinner we met again, and every one now seemed to have acquired a fresh stock of spirits. I hope you comprehend that my Lord took it for granted I knew nothing of Bellmont, or that he was sent for to pay his court to me;---he has too nice a sense of delicacy for that. I frequently saw him, with inquisitive looks, observing Bellmont's behaviour to me,

no doubt, with a view to discover what impression my charms had made upon him; and I fancy he would perceive no violent cause to fear they would fail in their wished for success. Finding I did not, as usual, when we went to the drawing-room, go to the harpsichord, his Lordship, willing, I suppose, to show me off to the best advantage, led me to it, and choosing his favourite song, begged me to indulge him. I had now a double motive for wishing to excel, and I really believe I did out-do my late out-doings, as somebody says; --- he was in raptures. Bellmont now freely expressed his transports,

on

on which I saw my Lord give Lady Mortimer a most significant look, as if to say, I think the young man is fairly caught. All this, my dear Charlotte, is mighty well, --- but the winding up of the plot, there---there's the difficulty; how on earth, that is to be brought about, the Lord above knows, for I do not; and if things go on so swimmingly, I fear the last act will come upon us before we have got our parts. I wish, with all my spirit, you and Marchmont would lay your sober heads together, and help us out at this pinch. My wit is at its last gasp, and as for Bellmont, he is quite out of his senses

senses with joy and delight. I am plagued to death to keep him in any sort of order. Were not his Lordship less clear sighted, luckily, on this occasion, than he ever was before, I fancy he could not but see our acquaintance is of a longer standing than 'tis our present business to confess. I very wisely draw a happy omen from this circumstance, as I have done from many others, and am sometimes tempted to believe we shall at last bring matters to bear: sure, I am, if we do not turn out a most extraordinary couple, if it really should ever come to that, much good labour has been thrown away; what
say

say you? I at some moment's fear my friend Harriot will think me a very ungrateful creature, but she would do me injustice; pray say something about this when you write to her. I have had so many things to mind and manage lately, that 'tis no great wonder if I am a worse correspondent than formerly; by the by, I saw in the last papers, the marriage of both the Miss Montagues; and a flaming paragraph it made, --- is it true? and did they both play the fool on the same day? --- with what ease some folks can manage this matter to what others can do, --- but to be sure, we, who have all this bustle,

are

are entitled to a vast deal more
happiness; having had so much
trouble before-hand, that is but
fair you know. — Adieu, my love,
Bellmont, kisses your hand; and I
am truly,

Your's,

M. B.

THE

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

A SHORT letter, my dear, we are all on the move; my Lord got letters last night from his steward; he is obliged to be at home tomorrow; he will not suffer Lady Mortimer to break her promise; we are all to accompany him to Bellmont Castle. He sent off a servant this morning, to give orders for our reception; all is ready, the carriages are ordered, and I must bid you adieu. Charlote, one word more, think of me being on the point of entering the very house in which our dear father was born,

born. Ah! what will be the feelings of your Maria at that moment, to what a train of melancholy reflections will it give rise,

Farewel,

M. B.

LADY

LADY MORTIMER

M R S. MARCHMONT.

DO not be alarmed, my dear Madam, at receiving a letter from me, when you, no doubt, expected one from our charming Miss Bellmont. I have much to tell you, but first must explain why I am employed to write: she is at present a little indisposed; yet but a little, I give you my honour; however, I thought it better she should not attempt it herself, as I feared it might too much hurry her spirits, which

which have already met with a severe shock, though it is now happily over. You are sensible, my dear Madam, that I am tenderly interested in all that concerns your charming sister; who that knows her can fail to be so, --- but I forget that while dwelling on her praises, I keep you in suspense. Let me, then, at once, fulfil my promise to her of giving you the particulars of an event which has occasioned her present disorder: Lord Bellmont, who has conceived for her the most tender attachment, insisted on our accompanying him home, when he was obliged to return. I had before given him my promise,

promise, and with pleasure kept my word; Mr. Bellmont was of the party; --- we found every thing prepared for our reception in the most elegant manner, and passed the first day in the utmost harmony. His Lordship, quite delighted to see Bellmont's assiduity, and the pleasure with which my young friend received it, I, as well as herself, had a thousand fears, when looking forward to the important moment in which her real name was to be revealed, and perfectly at a loss how to make the discovery, without the hazard of losing all the ground we had gained, --- when an unforeseen accident

saved

saved us all farther consultation.
 The day after our arrival, his
 Lordship proposed our taking a
 view of the Castle. I had fre-
 quently been there before; but
 knew it was well worth Miss Bell-
 mont's notice, as there are few
 more magnificent houses, or more
 nobly furnished, in England. He
 very politely led us through the
 apartment himself, when coming
 into the picture-gallery, where he
 has a very fine collection of pain-
 tings, by the first masters, Maria
 had not gone many steps, when a
 full length portrait of her father
 caught her eye; the resemblance it
 seems was striking, a thousand in-
 teresting

tereesting reflections instantly occurred to her imagination. Her own present trying situation, altogether so intirely overcame her, that, to the utter astonishment of Lord Bellmont, on whose arm she leaned, as we viewed them; she faintly exclaimed, while her eyes, filled with tears, were fixed on it, oh! my father, my revered, my beloved father, and instantly sunk to the floor in a swoon. Judge, my dear Madam, what a scene of unspeakable confusion this accident must throw us all into; the dear creature's situation was almost forgot by us all, so great was our consternation. Good God! cried Lord Bell-

mont, what am I to think of this? have I then been imposed upon by Lady Mortimer, or is it a dream? did she not call him father? speak to me, answer me quickly, Madam. Say, I intreat you, what I am to conclude from this most extraordinary circumstance! Ah! my Lord, 'tis in vain longer to conceal it; yes, you have been imposed upon, though I would gladly find a less guilty expression. You have been innocently deceived, my Lord, and I take all the blame upon myself, if you think it deserves any blame; behold in that angel form, whose affectionate heart has now betrayed her, the lovely daughter

daughter of Colonel Bellmont. He with difficulty reached a chair ; --- Bellmont, who observed his distress, flew to support him, and then embracing his knees with a look of the deepest anguish, implored him to pity and pardon him ; to look with compassion on the woman he adored, the woman whose amiable manners, whose beauty and good sense had so highly charmed himself. Leave me, cried his Lordship, but with a voice in which anger had no share ; leave me, and take proper care of that child. He now threw himself back on his chair, and leaning his head on his hand, seemed buried in thought. I

drew the most pleasing prefages from his behaviour, and now joining Caroline, who had all this time been employed in endeavours to recall her loved friend to life, at length had the happiness to see signs of recovery. Poor Bellmont was like one distracted; and no wonder, my dear Madam, since independent of seeing her he so tenderly loved, reduced to this condition, he had also a certainty that the important hour was now arrived that must decide his fate, and that of his Maria; --- think then, what his feelings were at that moment. At last she opened her eyes, and casting them languidly around

her, ah ! what will become of me, cried she, in a faint tremulous voice ? what will become of the unfortunate Maria ? Seeing my Lord still there, she made an effort to rise, but was so very weak, it would have been impossible without our assistance. Oh ! lead me, lead me to him, cried she, and on my knees let me implore him to bless his poor trembling child, who never, except in this one instance, gave him offence. She threw herself at his feet, bathed in tears ; Bellmont followed her example. Their silence, for neither had power to utter a word, was infinitely more moving than the most

studied eloquence. His Lordship gazed upon them with irresolute looks. Never were a variety of contending passions so strongly expressed as on his countenance at that moment. Ah ! my Lord, cried I, scarce able to support myself, so exceedingly was I distressed at the scene before me. Check not those affectionate sentiments I see rising in your breast ; let me, my Lord, implore you to pity those poor children ; forget what is past, and let me have the consolation to see that the innocent stratagem I have contrived, has produced the happy effects I so ardently wished. --- He could no longer withstand our united

united prayers ; — rise, cried he,
 rise and come to my arms. --- Ah!
 my poor girl, I fear they have been
 too long unjustly closed against you ;
 but come to my heart, they are
 now, and not I trust too late, open
 to receive you ; she threw her arms
 round his neck, and sobbed aloud.
 — Bellmont, continued his Lord-
 ship, I forgive you, but to this
 suffering angel your thanks are due.
 There, added he, taking her hand,
 and presenting it to him, receive a
 gift from me, which had I done
 you greater injury than *you* have to
 charge me with, would be an
 ample compensation ; and for you,
 my amiable child, I can only wish

he may prove himself worthy to possess so inestimable a treasure. --- Retire, my love, and by the help of those friends who have been kinder to you than I have yet been, compose your spirits, try to regain your usual tranquillity. Let me, when next we meet, find you chearful and happy, — mine, I now find, will much depend upon it. Bellmont, lend me your arm, — they withdrew, leaving us so astonished, so delighted, yet so wholly overcome, that it was with difficulty we could follow them ; we, I say, my dear, Madam, for indeed both Caroline and myself were in the greatest agitation of spirits ; —
but

but your Maria had scarce strength left to walk to her apartment, and when there, found herself so ill, that she was obliged to lie down. — We then left her to her repose, in hopes an hour or two's rest would be of service to her. — We found Lord Bellmont still much agitated; how is my poor child, said he, as I entered the apartment? I have left her, my Lord, replied I, in her bed; she is exceedingly low, her spirits, though naturally good, could not stand the shock she has just met with; but I trust she will soon be able to wait upon your Lordship, and express her gratitude for your generous treatment of her.

with which her heart is at present oppressed. — Lady Mortimer, replied he, mine, I give you my word, is not much more at ease; — some things, I fear, have been carried too far; — but spare me the particulars; I wish to forget the past. All, all, shall be atoned for. — I must, however, beg you will answer me a few questions: pray by what means did my poor child fall into your hands? believe me, the friendship you have so kindly shown her, shall make a lasting impression on my heart. I only regret that ever I should have compelled her to seek protection from any other than myself. — I now,
my

my dear, Madam, informed him of all that had happened, and dwelt particularly on the prudent resolution she had made; -- not to give her hand to Mr. Bellmont, without his Lordship's consent, though persuaded there were not the smallest hopes of obtaining it; and though by rejecting it, she denied herself the only prospect of happiness the world could bestow upon her. He was extremely affected with this part of my narration; -- she is an astonishing young creature, cried his Lordship, -- so much spirit, yet so much good sense, so prudent a conduct in a situation so trying, I never met

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with.

with. Ah, Lady Mortimer, had I sooner known her worth, --- but I have been much to blame, I might have known it, continued he, sighing, --- yes, I might have known it, had I --- let us forget, my Lord. Let no disagreeable reflections on the past destroy our present felicity, who can boast of having always acted right? the best of us are liable to error: --- to acknowledge and redress the wrongs we have done, is all that can be expected of man. Your Lordship has acted nobly, generously. I honour, I revere those tender feelings which have inspired the sentiments which have now taken place in your breast.

breast. You have done ample justice, you have greatly atoned for past errors, and have rendered two amiable worthy young people supremely happy ; --- but are you certain, Lady Mortimer, said he, with looks of great anxiety, are you certain my lovely girl is in no danger. I cannot be easy, till assured I have nothing to fear for her health, alas ! she has suffered but too much already. I expect doctor D. here every moment. I wonder, added his Lordship, looking at his watch, what detains him so long. I ordered the servant to make all possible expedition ; oblige me, Madam, by going to her apartment,

I know

I know your regard for her will induce you to forgive this liberty. Let me know when you think the dear creature will be able to admit me to see her. -- Poor Belmont too, we must have a little compassion for him; he entered the room at this moment, and I left them together. --- I was exceedingly alarmed to find, as I feared by a burning heat she complained of, and violent head-ach, symptoms of a fever: she was eager to ask a thousand questions, but I begged her to spare them awhile; assured her all was well, that my Lord adored her, and had no wish but her recovery, and of going to her apartment as soon as possible.

speedy recovery. --- The Doctor now came in, he felt her pulse, --- ordered her some weak wine whey, and advised me to prevail upon her to undress and go to bed, — assuring me we had nothing to fear; said she was feverish, but his prescription, and her being kept perfectly quiet, would soon remove it. Lord Bellmont, by the Doctor's advice, did not come in, but he stood at the door of her apartment, accompanied by her lover; and having heard all that passed, they retired in the deepest affliction. After taking proper care of my sweet patient, I joined them, and said
all

all I could to console and dispel their apprehensions. Believe me, my dear Mrs. Marchmont, I found it no easy task; --- however, next morning we had the happiness to find her perfectly cool and composed. She had slept some hours, her mind was at ease, all her troubles were happily over: these delightful reflections, no doubt, were efficacious remedies. I have just left her; the Doctor who was here early in the morning, pronounces her out of danger; nay, says she might leave her room to-day; but thinks it better she should confine herself one more, lest she should, by too great an exertion, bring

bring on a return of her disorder. He has, however, given the gentlemen leave to visit her for a few moments, but charged them to forbear entering on any interesting subject, lest it should flurry her yet weak spirits: — thus, my dear, Madam, I have obliged your charming sister; — accept my warmest congratulations on the happy reconciliation which has taken place; may it be productive of every felicity to her and all her amiable family. You may expect the pleasure of hearing from herself in a day or two; in the mean time, depend on my utmost attention; and

and believe me, with the most perfect esteem,

Your most obedient servant,

A. MORTIMER.

MARIA

M A R I A.

T O

MRS. M A R C H M O N T

OH! my Charlotte, what a change, how delightful is the situation of your happy, supremely happy sister: I have much to say, much to tell you; but my kind indulgent friends will not permit me to write above half a dozen lines; — and those they sweetly insist on dictating to me; they oppress my grateful heart with their affectionate attention. Ah! I shall never have it my power to deserve half their tenderness, — they check my pen; —
and

and my revered Lord Bellmont, who now sits by me, bids me ask you, my Charlotte, and you, my beloved Charles, if you can so far conquer your too just resentment as to forget what is past ; — if you can, he bids me add, the first proof he desires of it is, the favour of your presence here, accompanied by my dear Marchmont. You will find his arms and heart open to receive you ; he is impatient to embrace you all, and to make every possible atonement for injuries he cannot recollect without the most painful emotions ; these, my Charlotte, are his Lordship's own words. — Ah ! fly, my sister, and help me to express

press, as I wish, the sense I have of the infinite obligations every hour conferred upon me by the most generous of men. The happy Bellmont too, earnestly joins in this request; — come then, my sister, my brothers, come and be a witness to the felicity of your Maria. Gladly would I write more, but some degree of weakness, the effects of my late indisposition still remains; and I am sweetly commanded to lay down my pen. Ah! Heavens, with what tenderness am I commanded.

Your's,

M. B.

MRS.

M R S. M A R C H M O N T

T O

M A R I A.

FROM henceforth let none despair, whose actions are governed by the dictates of virtue and prudence. --- You, my loved Maria, are a happy instance to prove they shall, by perseverance in the paths of their duty, in due time meet their reward.

Oh ! my sister, how amply are your distresses repaid ! --- My heart overflows with gratitude to the
great

great Disposer of all events, for the felicity bestowed upon you ; gladly would I fly to you, my love, but my present situation will not permit my taking so long a journey, or rather let me say, my Marchmont's apprehensions ; for my own part, I should be under none, but *he*, infinitely more attentive to me than I am to myself, intreats me to give up all thoughts of it, as he should be miserable. The truth is, I was inclined to rebel a little upon this delightful occasion ; but indeed, my dear, 'tis the first instance in which I have shewn so wife-like a spirit. I, might I presume, have carried my point by a

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little

little more pouting, but the peace of my engaging Henry is too dear to me, to allow me to practice those arts, however efficacious they may sometimes prove. I found infinitely more heart-felt pleasure in yielding to his gentle commands, than I could have experienced, had I persisted in my request, though I had thereby gained my point. Since the happiness of embracing Lord Bellmont is at present denied me, I beg you will present my affectionate duty in the most respectful terms ; assure him every wish of my heart is now gratified, since thus restored to his favour. His Lordship may depend upon it, it shall be the future

future study of my life to prove myself worthy that place in his heart he so kindly offers me. Mr. Marchmont and my brother set off for the Castle this morning; so impatient were they to obey his Lordship's summons, that I could not prevail upon them to wait for this letter.

Lady Ann most obligingly insisted on staying with me, confessing at the same time, she had no violent inclination to meet his Lordship; she is a charming girl, and her vivacity will enable me to bear my disappointment with more resignation.

What a change, indeed, my Maria! — And though the dreaded

eclaircissement has cost you some pain, yet, it certainly was a most fortunate accident, that thus happily brought it about ; had you waited till I could have contrived a method, by which to have made the important discovery, you would still, my dear, and for life, I fear have continued ---- Miss Neville. ----- You charged Marchmont and me to lay our sober heads together for that purpose ; but alas ! my dear, they are too sober for plotting ; never more would they have been separated had it depended on the success of our undertaking, not but we all formed a thousand different schemes, but they were no sooner formed than

con-

condemned as fruitless ; thank Fortune, you have managed your matters most admirably without our assistance.

Lady Ann is this moment come into my apartment, and having in a matronly manner, read me a lecture, for presuming to sit so long writing, though conscious 'tis not quite so easy to me as it was a few months ago, insists on my resigning the pen to her Ladyship---I dare not disobey, --- See what it is, my dear, to bring one's self into a scrape of this nature ! Adieu, then my love, accept ten thousand kind congratulations ; — present them

K 2

also

also to our Bellmont, and believe
me to be

Your highly delighted

C. M.

Well, my dear ! fo our adventures are on the point of being happily concluded ---- our's I say, for I would have you to know, I think I have made no inconsiderable figure in them ; though you, I suppose, have the vanity to look upon yourself as the heroine of the piece ; but pray do you set down a trip to
Scotland,

Scotland, as a trifle ? --- I give you my word, I look upon it in a more important light. Many a pang, many a conflict it cost my gentle heart before I could bring it to submission ; and indeed it was *wholly* with a view to rid you of my rivalry, that I agreed to it at last. —

You know, child, while my fair hand was not disposed of, Lord Bellmont could never have been brought to give up his pretended claim to it. ----- Don't you clearly see, my dear, that my affection for your brother had nothing to do in it ? -- O, not in the least --- apropos. Pray make my peace with your old admirer ;. tell him, though my

conscience would not let me rob you of your lover, yet as his heart was so set upon having me in his family, I thought the best thing I could do, and the only plan I could hit upon to indulge him, was to take my charming Charles, which answered *that* purpose, just as well as the other. ---- Mind what I say, my dear, and be sure you set this matter to rights. O, I had almost forgot, I must positively be your bride-maid ; so let us know where and when you are to exhibit ; if at the Castle, I must send for some good soul or other, to take charge of our poor Charlotte during my absence. I would not miss the show for the world

world ---- mine was sadly huddled over, but I fancy the knot will hold ---- yet in case we should take it into our heads, to follow the fashionable lead, it may not be amiss, you know, to find it *untieable*. So farewell, my love to all your young beaux, and *duty* to the old one.

Your's sincerely,

ANN BELLMONT.

K 4

MARIA

M A R I A.

T O

L A D Y A N N B E L L M O N T.

SET off my dear Lady Ann ; with
 infinite pleasure I accept your offer
 of gracing my exhibition with your
 charming presence ; my health is
 perfectly restored, my spirits in
 high order --- and in consequence of
 these delightful circumstances, my
 good friends here have taken the
 liberty to fix my day of days, with-
 out so much as giving poor me, a vote
 in

in the matter ; the truth is, they found no violent reluctance to combat with. After all that's past, it would have been a mere farce to attempt playing the hypocrite, so I even let them take their own way. this day se'nnight my dear Lady Ann, puts a finishing stroke to *our* adventures. You see I am too just not to allow you a share in them ; though I must claim the character of the heroine, as you rightly conjecture, but believe me, whatever dignity there may be in the sound of the title, I would not for a trifle, I give you my honour, play that part again ; so it shall be your turn next, and welcome ; I am heartily

sick of it. Your's was, as your Ladyship observes, rather a huddled up piece of business, yet there's a degree of spirit in a trip of that fashionable nature, not altogether amiss neither; what would you think, if I were to leave the good folks here in the lurch, while in full bustle with their preparations for the expected holiday, and set off for your old friend in the North --- let me have your opinion. — If you think our history will end with more ecclat by that addition to it, say the word, and off I go; one would not willingly mar the matter for a trifle. Ah! my poor Charlotte! --- what a pretty hand has she made

I

of

of herself! dear creature, how I long to see her in her present graceful state! --- and how I regret her incapacity to join our happy party. I could find in my heart, tell her, to give Marchmont a lecture for serving her such a wicked trick, did I not fear, as things are circumstanced at present, he might choose to be witty. My *charming* Lord Bellmont ---- you see I do not treat his Lordship with your Ladyship's faucy airs ---- he this morning sent for me to his dressing-room, and opening a cabinet, drew forth such a profusion of jewels and other decorations, that my eyes were absolutely dazzled. "Ah! my Lord,"

said I, as he most graciously presented them to me, "I shall never be able to support this brilliant load; here are enough to adorn an Eastern princess," "You must try what you can do, my charming girl," replied he, smiling, "for no Eastern princess shall ever have the offer of them; some of them, I suppose, will want new setting, they are not the work of yesterday; but all these matters you can settle at your leisure, having first settled those of more importance. Take them, my love, I know your sentiments too well, to believe they can add one tittle to your real happiness; but take them as a small mark

of my affection." I took his hand, and pressed it to my lips --- my heart was too full to speak --- he kissed my cheek with paternal tenderness, saying, "Go in my love, Lady Mortimer and Miss Percival will help you to arrange them." --- I obeyed; and on entering their apartment spread them on the table, asking what they thought of my present. In short, my dear Lady Ann, my heart is really oppressed with his kind indulgence; he seems to think he can never do enough to atone for his past severity. I am so full of myself, that I quite forgot to mention the meeting between him and our dear Charles, they had never met

before — nothing on earth could be more affecting ----- his Lordship's emotions pained me more than I can express ; sensible that reflections of no very pleasing nature gave rise to part of them, I have frequently observed a tear ready to drop, while gazing upon him with every mark of affection. Charles and I were reckoned exceedingly like my loved father, the resemblance seemed to strike him much, and no doubt, brought many painful ideas to his recollection. O ! that the best of men, the best of fathers had lived to see this happy day, to have been thus happily reconciled, and to have seen his loved children thus carested.

Forgive

Forgive me, dear Lady Ann, this interesting subject has softened me to tears. — I am serious in my request; do not then disappoint me, I shall impatiently expect the pleasure of seeing you. Get, as you propose, some good soul to take your dear charge off your hands, and instantly set off for Bellmont castle; Charles will meet you on the road — Mrs. Mountague, I am sure, if in the country will supply your Ladyship's place. Come then, and be a witness to the felicity of your

Affectionate sister,

M. B.

LADY

LADY ANN

TO

MRS. MARCHMONT.

NO, positively, Charlotte, I never will forgive Marchmont; we have very near expelled him our joyous society, for putting it out of your power to make one of it --- 'tis horrid. — I had no idea I should find it so entirely delightful; how could I, you know, my dear, fancy this old foul of a lord, who has been such a plague to us all, could do things.

things with so much taste, so much life and spirit; I quite doat upon him now, and could find in my heart to cry because he did not take me himself. Such magnificence, such pomp, Ah! positively I shall envy this little bewitching Maria; she is actually, Charlotte, the loveliest creature my eyes ever beheld; no wonder the fellow was blind to my charms, yet, till now I have ever had a pretty high opinion of them. --- But it is not wholly her beauty neither, that charms one, 'tis her manner, 'tis her easy engaging behaviour that thus enchants us; such a voice in my life I never
 heard,

heard, even in speaking, 'tis harmony. No wonder she has made such a fool of Bellmont, he absolutely has scarce common civility for any other soul; a fine time I should have had of it, but for my Charles, who has the grace to think me the first of all angels. As for your Marchmont, I believe *he* thinks the only angel upon earth, is now at Rose-Hill, pining for his absence.

Lord Bellmont, indeed for old acquaintance sake, does make shift to say a few soft things to me now and then; but Maria is all in all with him; Charles too, is a violent favourite,

vourite, and no wonder, since to do him justice, he is — what is he not that's charming? — Well, and so next Thursday, we are to play at matrimony; and our Maria tries all she can to put a grave face upon the matter; — misses always do, you know, my dear, though out of their wits with joy for all that; but it looks sentimental, and so pretty, to have a few palpitations, and so forth. — Poor I, had nobody to witness mine, but my dear Charles; so you see, it was not worth one's while to make a bustle about it: but this, in full congregation, 'tis quite another affair, and a comfortably

ably full one this is likely to be, for cards of invitation are sent over the whole country, not, however, to go to church with us, Maria begged to be excused there; but next day we begin our balls, entertainments, and every thing we can contrive. I am to be mistress of the revels, and let me alone to find the good folks employment; those sort of matters are my forte; I think my talents will hold out for one week at least, and my dear old favourite has given me unlimited power to exert them, without controul. 'Tis horrid, as I said before, that you are not here. By the by, Lady Mortimer's son,

ylds

Sir

Sir Harry, arrived here last night; a good handsome young fellow, and has a most delightful fund of chat, so I shall depute him my assistant; he has the civility too to divide it pretty equally between Maria and myself; I had some apprehensions lest he should be so smitten with her charms, as wholly to overlook mine; but he has been bred in France, of course, could not be guilty of such ill breeding.

Are you satisfied, my dear, is this letter long enough, have I given you a tolerable idea how matters go on here? if not, I cannot help it; Marchmont is scribbling too, he
may

may, perhaps, succeed better. As for Maria, she could as easily preach as write at present, so you have nothing to expect from her, six months hence perhaps, she may be restored to her sober senses, but it will take twice that time to make any earthly thing of Bellmont, he is absolutely fit for no one purpose --- Lord help their silly heads, how ridiculous do they appear in the eyes of *us* old married folks.

Well, adieu! my dear; take care of yourself, do you hear. — When we have fairly fettered them, busy as I shall be, I will steal five minutes to tell it you.

Next

Next Thursday, you may paint
us in your mind's eye as fine as
hands can make us, parading away
to church.

Your's, ever,

ANN BELLMONT.

THE

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

GIVE us joy, my dear --- yet we have more than we know what to do with, so you may keep it for your own use. — 'Tis all over --- we are just returned from church --- the bride more angelic than ever, if possible, and Bellmont a greater idolitor. My Lord, too, has a dash of the Pagan in him, for he absolutely adores her. I see plainly unless she actually is an angel, as they take all imaginable pains to persuade her, she must be spoiled to all intentions

tents and purposes, no mere woman can possibly stand it. All the world are expected to dinner; in the evening we have a ball, ditto to-morrow, and so on, till we are sick of it; after that expect to see us in all our glory at Rose-Hill. Lord Bellmont says, since you cannot come to him, he is determined to go to you — here's the bride, as I live ----- well, well, take the pen and say what you please.

Adieu ! Adieu !

Charlotte ! my dear Charlotte ---
 what shall I say, how express any

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degree

degree of my happiness ! The awful ceremony is over, my love, and I am the happiest of women.

Lady Ann, I see, has told you of our intended visit — need I attempt to tell how impatiently I long for the day that will restore me to the affectionate arms of my beloved sister. Gladly would I dispense with the bustle they are going to engage me in, to enjoy that felicity. — One week, my love, one short week, and I fly to the dear friend of my heart. My Bellmont bids me say a thousand kind things ; our dear Charles too, lays the same commands upon me.

Ah !

Ah ! the carriages are beginning to croud the gate — I must go to be gazed at — how horrid ! But I am richly repaid for that mortification. Adieu ! my dearest, dear sister.

Your's ever,

M. .B

T H E E N D.

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